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One Script, Two Perspectives: Generation Me and The Staging of Really Really

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One Script, Two Perspectives:
Generation Me and The Staging of *Really Really*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine
Arts in Theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

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One Script, Two Perspectives: Generation Me and The Staging of Really Really is a reflection on the approach, pre-production, rehearsal and post-production phases of the play, *Really Really* by Paul Downs Colaizzo, which debuted in the Shafer Street Playhouse on February 20, 2015 on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. The cast included Kaelie Ukrop, Adam Valentine, Ethan Malamud, Telos Fuller, Solomon Dixon, Molly Kaufman, and Katie Stoddard.

This paper looks at the processes involved with the creation of that piece. Focus is given to the problems and challenges involved with casting, production, rehearsals, post-production and effective directing methods.

Introduction

Every twenty-one hours there is a rape on an American college campus. – Crisis Connection National College Health Risk Behavior Survey, 2000.

Really Really by Paul Downs Colaizzo is inspired by the 2006 Crystal Gail Mangum vs. Duke University criminal case surrounding the accusation of rape made against three members of the men's Duke Blue Devils Lacrosse Team. In the spring of 2014, Kirstin Riegler Hensley and I were fortunate to serve as teaching assistants for the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Senior Showcase. Upon making selections for the seniors, we both chose material from *Really Really*. While coaching two different scenes, we each instinctively arrived at differing opinions of who the antagonist and protagonist were in the story. Our heads rose, our eyes met and after an enthusiastic high five, suddenly a thesis was born. Based on current research regarding sex crimes within sports organizations in the university setting, we resolved to mount two different productions of the same script from two different angles with the goal of answering the question: Can watching live theater change social opinion? From that moment, we were committed in collaborating to the fullest extent by creating our own individual approach alongside maintaining one comprehensive shared experience. With all the controversy surrounding the recent sexual assault cases occurring at universities and colleges throughout the United States, the relevance of this play could not be timelier.

When I was fourteen years old, I was a victim of sexual abuse. The perpetrator was a male who was close to me at the time. He was babysitting me and over the course of

several months, I was made to repeatedly engage in behavior that I could not fully comprehend nor consent to at the time. Kirstin also had an incident that she is discussing in her thesis. Because we both have had individual experiences in the past, suffice it to say the content of this play hit close to our hearts. This has allowed us to bring the subject matter to audiences with heightened sensitivity and respect to anyone who has struggled to overcome insurmountable obstacles. This production and accompanying thesis is thus dedicated to those survivors of sexual assaults and equally for those who may have been wrongly accused.

~ Jorge Bermudez and Kirstin Riegler Hensley

Chapter 1: Approach

Rape is a repugnant crime and one for which the evidence often relies on one person's word against others. – Crying Rape by Cathy Young.

Really Really takes place over the course of two spring days, probably forty-eight hours. Kirstin and I have decided to set the play on the Dartmouth College campus in Hanover, New Hampshire in 2008. The two main locations are Leigh and Grace's apartment and a house where Cooper and Davis live. There is also a conference room and a laundry room to round out the locations. The economic environment for Leigh and Grace is middle class, which can look lower class in this very affluent area. Leigh is referred to as a "poor dog", however Grace refers to purchasing items on Leigh's behalf so this means their apartment is probably an upgrade to what Leigh's surroundings typically look like and either on par or slightly below to what Grace is used to. For the boys' house, there are many references to the wealth of Cooper and Davis. The house has a Waterford clock and there is mention that someone could buy a townhouse with using only the value of his silverware. Davis' family is just as affluent as Cooper's, however, there is mention that his family won't necessarily share with him so although he is at Dartmouth, living in an expensive home, Davis probably does not carry an unlimited allowance. There is no mention of him needing to hold a job to subsidize his income, however, so although he is not as financially fluid as Cooper, he is still in the upper echelon of college kids his age.

The political environment is one of unrest for the wealthy; (presumably Republican) environment. There are numerous references to needing to carve out a financial future for the characters that is indeed in doubt. I will use the economic crash of 2008 as a political/financial backdrop for these characters. This will assist in not only painting an economically intense picture for the actual characters but this timing could also put their parents in a suddenly questionable status by threatening their previously long-standing economic stability and double the desperation these characters face in terms of sustaining a future. The social environment is a millennial college campus. There is underage drinking, sex, and probably drugs used at Cooper's house during what is referred to as the "tunnel of Love" party. When not partying, the environment is about playing video games, Frisbee, rugby, and other sports related activities.

"This play is about a "generation of self-awareness and self-concern – where they make what we want and what we want is more me. Facebook. Twitter. All social media. We are the members of a generation that has been dubbed Generation Me." – Grace, *Really Really*.

In the central action of the play, we have Leigh, a young woman in college of probably 21-22 years of age. She is searching to secure a future for herself as a method of survival and perhaps more importantly, as a method of escaping her troubled past. There are several textual clues to support a history of physical abuse, perhaps even sexual, although this is not specifically stated. Leigh's sister, Haley references a childhood trick of counting down from 200 as a coping mechanism to get through an attack. There are markings on Leigh's back and remembering their father's belt is discussed. Leigh

references playing with a certain childhood friend particularly at lunch time so that his family would feed her. Additionally, the sister is jealous because as a consequence to not being involved in the plan, she often went hungry. The play is inherently ambiguous about various issues and leaves just enough evidence to draw conclusions from without necessarily connecting any particular dot with absolute certainty. Regardless of the specificity of certain details, it is clear that Leigh came from a dysfunctional home on shaky financial ground and getting as far away from this overall climate, is what drives her.

At the beginning of the play, Leigh is living with her roommate, Grace, a pre-law student at Dartmouth. Grace refers to purchases she has made on Leigh's behalf both for friends of theirs and also for Leigh herself. Grace is seen cooking for Leigh. She also refers to homework she has completed for Leigh to either reference or copy from. It is evident that Leigh is taken care of in many ways by Grace. To reciprocate, it appears that Leigh's main contribution is to clean the apartment. It is not emphasized whether this is part of a previously agreed upon arrangement where the needs of the roommates and the apartment are divided equally or not so one of the first questions presented by this play is: Does Leigh's survival plan include using Grace as a sugar momma? In my approach the answer is yes but it is more of unconscious side effect of her need to survive. This differs from a Leigh who fully understands her plight and/or who calculatedly uses people for only her personal gain. Quickly into the scene, Leigh's boyfriend, Jimmy is introduced. His father is a dean at Dartmouth College. The inference here is that he is of great wealth and power on the campus and by dating him; Leigh's status has risen to the top of the

social ranks. A pregnancy is mentioned early-on and although her credibility is in question, you can easily interpret that Jimmy plans on taking care of this responsibility which begs the next question(s): Was Leigh's pregnancy genuine or did she fake it? If genuine, did she get pregnant on purpose? Is Jimmy a part of her survival plan or is that a happy accident in an otherwise truthfully loving relationship? We will present a Leigh who was genuinely pregnant. Although she did not trick or manipulate Jimmy into having unprotected sex with her, she was not overly concerned with birth control. The last significant relationship that pre-exists the events of the play is that of Leigh and her sister, Haley. Haley refers to Leigh's past of lying for personal gain. Of course, we cannot be sure if Haley's accounts are based in truth or if her memories are accurate.

Physically, Leigh is described as "almost beautiful". It is inferred that she is perhaps short or at least shorter than Grace who is described as "tall and beautiful". However, this is not as critical to me. What's important is that she can convey the qualities described above and can straddle the line between straightforwardly devious and victim from the wrong-side-of-tracks landing somewhere in the sphere of strategic survivor. My approach to Leigh can be summarized with this statement. She is not a saint, and is indeed morally questionable however she is not a criminal either. She is a reluctant opportunist and it must be clear that any infractions incurred or missteps she has taken come from a place of pain avoidance and an understandable urgency to find stability.

Cooper describes Davis as the "nicest guy I know" and also as more of a "vice president" type. He is nicknamed "Good Davis" by his other rugby teammates. His father is a CFO of an unnamed company or industry and his mother is a philanthropist who has

already spoiled her son. He is seen studying in an earnest effort to also survive – not necessarily learn. It is mentioned that his friend Johnson takes notes for him and helps him succeed in school, however it is also shown that Davis, through his own volition, makes an earnest attempt to study. However, this is not necessarily to learn but to also achieve success in a pre-determined path to “pass my exam, graduate college, fight for a good job, or any job, marry a lovely woman and assemble some sort of life.” Although he comes from an affluent family, it is clear that he does not believe he will see any of that money. “I have a name to uphold. Not a kingdom to take over.” In this way, he and Leigh are driven by the same need to succeed and feel alone whether or not that is actually the case.

There is no specific physical description of Davis. However, he is an integral part of the Dartmouth Rugby Team who has been Ivy League Division Champions every season but one between the years of 2003 – 2008. He must be in good physical shape and possess an athletic appearance. Although well dressed, he is not flashy. He should have a versatile look in being able to radiate innocence and change to a serial rapist with ease and rapidity.

There is a previous relationship with an unseen character named Natalie that is often mentioned in connection with some form of physical damage and emotional affect. I will approach this character as Davis perhaps having raped Natalie but not necessarily remembering that he had done so. He will suffer from near panic-attacks that may cause him to engage in violent or physical behavior but he is not ready to confront or admit this to himself and therefore his brain has blocked these details out. This informs my approach to Davis with the fact that the inciting incident of this play is that he did, in fact, rape

Leigh. However, he may not remember this fact immediately, and does become aware of his past during the end of act 1 when he chokes Cooper. At this moment, he realizes what he is capable of and that he did indeed rape both Natalie and Leigh. Of course, he spends more time trying to wrap his brain around this fact so the actor must not be overly obvious that this is the realization. Going back and forth questioning the innocence of both Leigh and Davis will be the creative challenge by making sure we only hint at Davis being the rapist two or three times throughout the show and only during the final rape scene will we make it clear that yes, he in fact committed this crime. I will describe this more specifically later when I discuss staging the rape scene.

Out of all of Davis' relationships with the male characters of the play, it is with Cooper that he has the most adult dynamic. They discuss plans for the future, strategies on success and options to maximize the enjoyment of living. Davis can be described as athletic, unassuming, doe-eye innocent but versatile enough to look like a devil or criminal easily.

Cooper is the captain of the rugby team. He is the alpha male who is used to getting what he wants. He treats all other male characters as if they are inferior to him. He elevates his status by putting others down. He often refers to the others as pussy, pansy, vice president, etc. He also refers to himself as vicious or as being king when referencing his status on the team. In personality, I will use the character of Stifler from the American Pie movies. He is outspoken and has little respect for boundaries. He roughhouses with all the other men yet there is a sense of playfulness that he believes he possesses. He is the model of what this play was written about – the selfishness of “Generation Me.” He uses people

and does not care or is not aware of the one-sidedness of his relationships. For example, he has Jimmy make a special arrangement with his father to allow him to stay on campus for as long as he wants without being enrolled in classes. When Davis is accused of rape, Cooper's first instinct is to speak with Jimmy and ensure that his academic arrangement will not be threatened rather than rescue his friend, Davis. This is after he attempted to lure a confession out of Davis with the promise that he would never tell and professed to help him fight the allegations.

The question of his sexuality can be a question that we play with in this production depending on the actor we cast. The character makes references to socializing with women but not with sleeping with them. He also states that he does not date. There is also a scene where Cooper asks Davis to give him a hug. In the script, it notes that the hug is a "rather comforting, long hug." The more I have this character rough house, the more I could add a slightly homoerotic undertone but I am leery of this as I don't want it to detract from the main plot of the story. Still, if I were to direct a production of this play not tied to a thesis, it might be interesting to explore the angle that Davis is NOT a rapist and Cooper is in love with Davis and because it is unrequited, he partners with Leigh to work together to set him up. However, in our production at VCU, Cooper represents the epitome of white male privilege. "You're rich. You're white. You shouldn't have a problem." He should be the most athletic of all the males; stylish yet does not mind being messy; Caucasian male; huge sense of bravado.

Jimmy, on paper, is an ideal mate for someone like Leigh. He is wealthy. He has a high social status as a member of the rugby team and also due to his father being the dean

at Dartmouth College. His future is perhaps the most solidified and not threatened by the current economic downturn. He is genuinely in love with Leigh. However, he is controlling as he expects Leigh to dump Grace as a friend and justifies it as a sacrifice that she must make for the sake of their relationship. He is mentioned as participating in Christian therapy so his driving force in his dynamic with Leigh will be that he wants to “save” her. Leigh mentions in Act two that “Jimmy can’t save something that doesn’t need to be saved.” Leigh is pregnant and as a result, he dotes on her to the point that he won’t let her do simple household chores for fear of exertion on the pregnancy. This translates into a smothering nature, which is the key ingredient as to why Leigh is not more attracted to him. It should be made obvious that although there is some chemistry between Leigh and Jimmy, it is more along the lines of being a safe bet rather than possessing any actual physical chemistry. His disposition should be naturally positive and perhaps righteous as if he was a missionary trying to enlighten those who surround him. This will make the serious scenes that much more impactful if he has an otherwise inherently good-natured disposition.

Grace is Leigh’s roommate and is a pre-law student. Although not as privileged, she can almost be considered a female counter-part to Cooper. Ideally she is like a future Michelle Obama. She is the president of the Future Leaders of America. She is well spoken, articulate and is not afraid to confront anyone or anything. Her penchant for organization may enter Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder territory. This quality will help establish a claustrophobic quality to Leigh’s life as she is smothered by everyone around she interacts with on stage (Grace, Cooper, and Haley) save for Davis. She is a control-

freak, however she must be likeable to an extent. I envision this character to provide some comic relief. In her second speech, she has lost her Louis Vuitton bag that contained the notes for her speech. Her OCD tendencies will inform this monologue giving it a quality of being almost completely derailed but she improvises and saves herself at the eleventh hour.

Also like Cooper, there is flexibility in the script with playing around with Grace's sexuality. Her unrequited love for Leigh is hinted at on at least two occasions. Depending on the actor cast, this may or may not be a layer I will introduce. As I have mentioned, this play's roller-coaster rhythm can be fueled with letting the audience decide on Grace's sexuality and whether this influences her decisions regarding Leigh. It could be played with Lesbian undertones or it can also simply be a pre-law student who enjoys being in control of every detail of her life.

She is an interesting character because she exists to ensure the meaning/message of the play is not lost on audiences. She has direct address speeches that explain what her generation stands for and the issues facing them. She is described as beautiful which can be important to support the reason for some of her success but I don't believe it's absolutely critical to cast a comely actor. She is also described as being tall and although this would be nice to have a tall actor, it is not essential to me at all.

Johnson is also a member of the rugby team and is the most genuine male character in the play. He is the friend that everyone wishes they had. He is the most studious one of the group. He organizes study groups and comes equipped with comprehensive note cards and various methods to help his teammates to academic success. He is perhaps the least

wealthy of the group because he has to be the most focused on securing a future. He is fun, stable and enjoys hanging out with his friends and is as loyal as can be until the rape scandal threatens his position. He is innocent of anything connected to the rape but just being associated with a potential rapist is cause for him to bail on a friendship for fear it would destroy his reputation and cause obstacles for future academic and employment success. “So, I’m sorry if on the eve of my graduation from college I don’t want to be thrown into the midst of a scandal...regardless of who’s right or wrong.”

Haley is Leigh’s older sister. She will embody everything that Leigh does NOT want to be. She is blunt and seems to possess no boundaries. She is cavalier about even the most personal of topics and certainly does not skate around any issues that would be sensitively dealt with in terms of the most popular social conventions. She lives in a Super 8 Motel in Waterbury, CT. with her boyfriend Rico whom she can’t communicate very well due to a language barrier. They are in the middle of a lawsuit and Haley is surprised to learn that you cannot sue a child. Her coping skills are formidable – at least on the surface – demonstrated by the fact that if Rico discovers he and Haley have nothing in common, she will be ok because of the Pomeranian dog he has promised to give her. She makes no apologies for her selfishness and makes it clear that she is what most people would consider to be a gold-digger. “If Jimmy leaves you, I’ll have no way to make Rico feel bad about himself. And then how else am I supposed to *get things?*” Her cavalier attitude is not to be confused with denial because she is straightforward about some of the details of her childhood with Leigh. She confesses that there was abuse by their father “...Dad. The

man with the belt and the beer...I remember him whenever I want to wear a backless shirt.”

She enters the play in Act Two after Jimmy has informed her of Leigh’s predicament. Upon entering the action, she quickly makes it known that she believes Leigh to have concocted the entire story as part of an overall plan. “We’re movin’ on up, Sis! And I’ll be here to help you deal with your convenient tragedy.” She makes sure Jimmy is not leaving her sister and asks “I mean post- ‘miscarriage’ he’s still loving you, right?” The fact that the word miscarriage is in quotes suggests that she believes this plan is a ruse. Haley is then fueled by jealousy “You lie to Jimmy about being pregnant so the fool will stay with you and then you are lucky enough to get raped. Everything falls right into your lap.” However, one of the redeeming qualities of Haley I want to highlight is her brutal honesty. She may be selfish and may be a representation of the Generation Me but she has integrity in that she makes no excuses for it. In her mind, she came from a troubled past and she is doing everything she can to survive with the difference being that she is up front about it. The subtext that Leigh is not being honest with her sister regarding her survival plan is an element I will highlight at the beginning of their scene together. However, it is critical for my version of the play that at a certain point, Haley becomes convinced that Leigh is indeed telling the truth and that her sister did, in fact, get raped. The moment when Leigh says “Oh come on, I would never steal a baby...God- am I monster? Is that what everyone thinks?” is the critical moment where she must convey to Haley that she is telling the truth. This will inform Haley’s response “Maybe. But that doesn’t mean bad shit can’t happen to you too. Did you do what we used to do? Did you

count down from 200?” In these few lines, there is a tonal shift. One where Haley becomes more authentic and validates that Leigh was raped. Counting down from 200 is the technique to deal with being raped that Leigh describes to Jimmy earlier in the play. Haley referencing this now will be the moment where the history of abuse is authenticated thus compelling her genuine care and will to protect her little sister.

The other redeeming quality of Haley is that she is unafraid to go after what she wants and is loyal to the end. It is she who takes it upon herself to attempt to get a confession from Davis. Even if her actions are self-serving, she is the only character to attempt to get concrete proof of what transpired the night of the Tunnel-Of-Love Party. Physically, I see her similarly to Leigh. However, although her clothes are not fashionable and may be considered cheap with holes and tears in them, she looks sexy in them and pulls off the look of “white-trash”. Her hair can be multi-colored with roots showing but she is an attractive woman who uses her feminine wiles to great accomplishment. It would be great if she was large-breasted, but this is not critical. She is tacky, strong-willed, blunt, but also must convey a heart when it’s clear she loves her sister.

As an overall approach to the text, I believe the dramatic scenes will successfully give the production the emotional weight it deserves. However, in my experience, people are more prone to accept intense scenes if it is mixed with appropriate moments of humor. My goal will be to find the humor in the play while giving the serious elements the utmost respect they deserve. For the women, I plan to highlight quirky variables to Grace and Haley. Grace will be a control-freak who gets completely flustered when something does not go according to plan. I may explore possible obsessive-compulsive behaviors that if

only touched upon, may be seen in a humorous light without mocking the seriousness of the disorder itself. Haley will be a breath of fresh air in terms of tone and rhythm. Having the majority of the play be in a delicate and serious rhythm, Haley's loud and quick-wit should be a welcome respite from the emotionally turbulent parts of the show.

For the men, I plan to demonstrate the dynamic of young competitive boys and how they interact in private when no one is watching. Examples of this will be Cooper's need to roughhouse and constantly treat most moments as a game. There will be moments of wrestling, slapping each other's buttocks, and other mock sexual activity that should bring some humor to the text when appropriate as the audience will see the joy and the highs that boys have. This will also assist in making the serious moments more impactful as they will consequently feel the abrupt crash that the allegations of rape cause in destroying the previous joy depicted. This will also aid me in establishing Davis as a potential rapist without it being overly obvious. If there isn't any roughhousing in the play, then Davis' physicality in the rape scene will come out of nowhere. Putting in the roughhousing will highlight Davis' athleticism as well as establish a culture of assertive behavior in young men on sports teams. If we see Davis be assertive within the context of what they consider playfulness between men, then you can draw a connection to the possibility of his sexual activity crossing into an assertive level that he may not fully understand how to temper unless a woman objects. In short, showing Davis be physical with the boys will hopefully say to some audience members that he could be a rapist and while saying to others that perhaps he is not a rapist but does enjoy getting rough and could be wrongfully accused of actual rape.

All of this is planned to make the rape scene as powerful as can be. As I have mentioned, being a survivor of assault, I spent many years in fear of the truth being known. Once I was able to tell the truth, I realized one thing. No one on this earth can truly understand an experience unless they have experienced it as well. And even then no one assault is really the same as another. What survivors do share is having our dignity stripped. We understand the fear, the loss of control and the powerlessness that is felt during an episode of assault. I know from personal experience that no matter how detailed I got, the most people could do is only imagine what it was like. And the people who listened to me were already people who were more sensitive to the world's issues. They supported me but it did not seem to be enough. Eventually, I felt a duty to educate those that are ignorant of this issue. I am not trying to judge anyone because if you go through life without incident then I consider you lucky. I often hear that people need to ask for help. This may work in many areas but I do believe there are exceptions. One is with the issue of sexual assault. When this happens to you, you are ashamed. Your first instinct is to crawl under a rock and forget it ever happened. You don't realize that the more you act like everything is ok the more your credibility is minimized by the time you actually confront the truth. The worst thing is to have this happen to you. But what is almost equally painful is when people doubt you. Therefore, I feel I have no other choice but to make the rape scene in this play as authentic as possible and stage it as powerfully as I can without it being theatrically for theatricality's sake.

For my production, the rape scene begins when Leigh and Davis are talking and Jimmy's horn honks. This sound cue will trigger a split-second reaction in Leigh that must

be perfectly executed. She will hear the honk and look up and panic for two moments. During those two moments her face will change from one of fear to an a-ha moment and in that second, the idea hits her and her face shows that she now knows what she must do. All of that needs to happen within seconds but it is critical to put her in a strong stage area, have Davis' back to the audience and ensure that the audience's focus is on Leigh to witness her transition from fear to survival action. The lights will change to a darker hue as Leigh decides to stage the apartment as if she had been raped, which catapults this scene into a nail-biting what-will-Davis-do moment. Leigh continues to throw furniture around to suggest a struggle in case Jimmy was to walk in at any moment. The focus is on her while Davis is in shock and otherwise tries to get Leigh to stop. Leigh slaps herself and tears off her clothes and begins to scream "STOP DAVIS! OW STOP! YOU'RE HURTING ME!" Leigh continues with the dialogue and here is where it gets tricky in terms of staging a production that in spite of her faults, Leigh was actually telling the truth all along and that Davis is indeed the rapist. As Leigh is delivering this dialogue it must appear that she is doing so to survive should her credibility questioned if Jimmy were to walk in. It can straddle the line of flirting with danger but she must never appear to actually taunt Davis. I want it to appear that she is preparing for the worst but she is not inviting him to rape her. Davis, on the other hand, has been in shock and is hurriedly trying to prevent Leigh from ruining his reputation. The question of his guilt or innocence has been hinted at throughout the play but it is definitely answered after Leigh's line "I SAID NO DAVIS! DO YOU REMEMBER MY TEARS ON MY FACE?" After that line is delivered, the lights will change again (perhaps to a devilish red) and Davis, who will

have had his face down, will slowly raise his head and assume a pose of control established before. (In Act 1, Davis tells Cooper that he suddenly feels like "...I have power again. And I want to be touched." We will have a certain psychological gesture to coincide with this line). At that moment, he looks over to Leigh and says, "You want this? Do You?" and because of the change in lights, the change in his physicality, the rhythm of his words and every other acting variable possible, the audience will see that Davis is indeed a rapist and is about to assault Leigh once again. In tandem, we will see the look on Leigh's face that she knows what is about to happen and that awful as it may be, she is in effect "taking one for the team" and accepts her fate to be raped as a necessary component of her overall success strategy.

In the script, there are moments when the lights go black on Leigh and Davis while the other characters appear in their own light for their final lines. It is not clear as to whether the action between Leigh and Davis continues in the dark while the other characters speak. The entire assault will be choreographed and I shall choose four key poses to freeze upon. The lights will go dim but the audience will still see that the assault is frozen in time with a specific gesture that will depict the stages of the rape escalating. It is written that Cooper and Haley speak *before* Davis penetrates Leigh. I will change this to have Leigh and Davis struggle while Cooper, Haley, Johnson, and Jimmy all deliver their lines and only then will Davis penetrate Leigh. The thought process is as follows: The lines that the other characters have are in the future to suggest that they felt justified with their behavior because it resulted in their eventual success in life. However, as each person delivers their final lines in a light special facing the audience, I will have them turn in

towards the rape scene as the lights dim on each of them and go back up on Leigh and Davis. This will suggest that one by one, each character is finally forced (or perhaps they are now mature enough) to confront the past as they watch what actually happened. They all have their moment and watch the struggle and when Jimmy comes on to discuss his dreams, we see the rape occurring right next to him. The scene finishes as scripted with Grace entering from the back of the audience as the house lights go up in a direct address to the audience. She claps, says “Really” and black out.

Chapter 2: Pre-production

Alone we can do so little; Together we can do so much – Helen Keller

On Oct 13th, 2014 at 8pm, Kirstin and I met for our first pre-production meeting. We discussed the importance and necessity of a 100% consistency between our two productions regarding set design, lighting designers, properties, and overall costume design. We agreed that the only elements that may differ would be casting, staging and sound and lighting design. At this point in the process, I did not have a stage manager. Kirstin's stage manager, Rachel Elder, third year BFA in Technical Theatre with a concentration in Stage Management student mentioned that her ASM, Page Tazewell, second year BFA in Technical Theatre with a concentration in Stage Management student was interested in being a production stage manager for my production and I quickly agreed. I had Daniel Braunstein, fourth year BFA in Theatre Performance student as my assistant director, however he had just been cast in a lead role for VCU's main stage production of *Pride And Prejudice*. The rehearsal commitment would now partially overlap our rehearsal schedule and put into question as to whether Daniel would be able to fulfill his commitment as assistant director. I congratulated Daniel on his role but I also related to him concerns over whether I would need to replace him for someone who would have the time to commit to the position. Daniel expressed to me he would like to remain

involved but that he would understand if I replaced him. After much consideration, I decided I would add another AD to supplement the role when Daniel was not available. Now knowing that I would have two assistant directors, it was important to me to have a heterosexual male voice in the process (Daniel) and balance that with a female voice. This resulted in adding Janelle Cottman, fourth year BFA in Technical Theatre with a concentration in Stage Management student as my second assistant director. Janelle is scheduled to be the production stage manager for the second offering on our main stage next semester, *Frankenstein*. When she initially expressed interest in being my assistant director, *Frankenstein* was due to start rehearsing after *Really Really* would close. However, a few weeks later, Janelle informed me that the dates had changed and *Frankenstein* would begin rehearsing on February 9, 2015, two weeks before my show was to open. After some thought, I decided I wanted to retain both Daniel and Janelle in spite of their scheduling conflicts and although not ideal, I resigned myself to the fact of having a third assistant director. Regardless of how experienced I may be, it is important to me to always have another set of eyes. A colleague had suggested the freshman performance major, Dante Piro as a possible candidate. I had met Dante once before and I was aware that he had an interest in directing and playwriting. He was already attached to Jessica Dotson's thesis production; *The Comet Hunter* scheduled to close at exactly the time when I would need an assistant director. I thus asked Dante if he would be interested in another project and he readily agreed. Finally, my assistant director positions were filled.

Next, Kirstin and I informed our teams about our two differing perspectives on the play. This was discussed in the shade of an experiment to gauge whether theatre can

impact social opinion on the play's subject matter. In this conversation, we stressed: collaboration and consistency as the driving force behind this beast of a project. We made the initial decision for our stage managers to be the research points for our productions. One intention was for them to ensure that the same articles, journals and other research sources would be used in a coordinated effort to inform our productions equally and with as minimal bias as possible. However, after further consideration we realized that having two undergraduate students would risk vital information potentially falling through the cracks. Hence, we felt having a professional dramaturg would be more beneficial in maintaining consistency of the research component, and we thus planned to approach our colleague, Grant Freeman, who within a few weeks was to receive his MFA in Theatre Pedagogy with a concentration in Dramatic Literature & Dramaturgy.

Finally, we discussed how important it would be to preserve the integrity of our individual processes and the idea of a gag order was brought to the table. It was decided from that moment on that anyone involved in the productions would not discuss relevant details to the process with the exception of the stage managers. Their responsibility would include occasionally watching rehearsals of the alternate production to ensure the consistency of script utilization and the use of set and properties.

On November 16, 2014, we met with Grant about his role as our dramaturg. We expressed three areas that would require his expertise: Research, lobby presentation, another set of eyes during the rehearsal process, and finally developing talking points for the post-show discussions. With respect to research, he said he was going to have to tell us, our production teams, and casts information that we would be uncomfortable for us to

hear due to the nature of the subject matter but was still vital in helping us grasp the emotional weight as well as the legal consequences of sexual assault. Grant explained that rarely has a director fully understood how to utilize a dramaturg and while expressing his frustration with prior projects, he exclaimed: “The director tells the story. The actors tell the truth. The dramaturg finds the truth.” Being able to have research of actual cases would benefit our actors to create their own truth to tell. We told Grant of our hope to have all research efforts be as exact as possible so that both directors have the same information and it is solely their interpretation of it that informs their production. Grant felt like this would be difficult because there is natural bias within humans but also because information will always be presented in the most beneficial method to the production. But after a moment, he expressed his desire to join the team because he felt it would be a challenge to present unbiased research. This was the moment when our collaboration truly came to life. Ultimately, Grant submitted to each of us a comprehensive packet of research and information that supported the angle of our individual productions.

Next we discussed the possibility of a lobby display for each production. It was important for us to have it be an extension of the theatrical experience versus simply being an introduction to the actors with headshots and bios for audience members to read as they walked into the theater. We tossed around two ideas one of which being each side of the lobby representing qualities of the male and female dynamic of the play. For example, the male side would represent the four male characters, Davis, Jimmy, Cooper, and Johnson and be filled with materials depicting sports teams, specifically rugby and Dartmouth College memorabilia highlighting their long running championship history. The female

side would contain elements representing the three female characters in the show, Leigh, Grace, and Haley, and be filled with materials depicting the “American dream”, “Generation Me”, and growing up on the “wrong side of the tracks”. The other idea revolved around specific sexual assault that had occurred on various college campuses throughout the United States. The cases would be exhibited by a sports hat from each institution hanging on the wall with a summary of the allegations below it. This would be supplemented with pictures and profiles showcasing character dossiers a la Facebook. After examining both options, we came back to the core message of the play; “Generation Me” and its handling of sexual assaults. This aided our decision to choose the second option because it clearly encompassed this core message.

A pertinent part of our thesis is how to measure the social impact our productions would have on the audience. This being so, the discussion centered on the development of discussion points to be used at the talk-backs was brought to the table. Kirstin and I wanted to gauge if watching our productions in succession would alter the audience’s opinion on who was to blame. We compiled a working list of questions to help in spurring conversation with the audience:

- 1) Whose production did you see - Kirstin, Jorge’s, or both?
- 2) Did Davis actually commit the rape for which he was accused?
- 3) Did you identify with any particular character?
- 4) Did you feel anyone got what he or she deserved?
- 5) Did watching the production change your social opinion or outlook on how sexual assault is handled?

- 6) How did the show affect your views on current sexual assault cases (i.e. University of Virginia, Vanderbilt University, etc.)?

Our third joint pre-production session transpired on November 24, 2014 at 7pm. Both teams assembled to discuss the audition process: date, location, time, what to prepare, and logistics. Kirstin and I felt strongly about having joint auditions and callbacks in order to keep the collaboration present. We agreed it would behoove us to have the auditions before the end of the fall semester in order to give those cast ample time to memorize their lines and prepare over the winter break so we could hit the ground running on the first day of the spring semester. As a result, auditions were scheduled for Saturday, December 6, 2014 between 1 and 6p.m. at the Shafer Street Playhouse room 302. Auditionees were asked to prepare a one-minute contemporary monologue and to have read *Really Really* in its entirety. We finalized the audition form and moved on to how callbacks, which were set for Sunday, December 7, 2014 between 1 and 4 p.m., would be handled. The selection of sides was made and the decision to not specify which show the actor would be called back for was established. For us as directors, it was critical to see the actors make choices and follow their individual impulses without being swayed by one concept or the other. This would maximize the blank canvas allowing us to manipulate him or her and to also observe how well they respond to each director's adjustments.

Prior to the start of auditions, Kirstin and I, our assistant directors, and stage manager met with our set and lighting designers making this our final joint pre-production meeting. We were immediately surprised and annoyed that none of the designers had read the play before our meeting so instead of a brainstorming session it morphed into us

educating them on the given circumstances of the play. This included a unit set both for the girl's apartment and the boy's house with scenes alternating between the two locations; a vital piece of information they should have known already prior to the meeting. On a more productive note, we were able to inform the designers of our needs regarding the big picture. I wanted the men's side of the set to give a frat house feeling but with East Coast affluence and I asked the designers to research this and create an environment that would reflect this. For the women, I asked that it be simpler in economic representation and that it should look organized but less colorful than the men's side. Thankfully, the meeting on a promising note as we officially entered the audition phase.

After the winter break, I held one more pre-production meeting. This time, I met with the designers to solely discuss my production. I was delighted that they had not only read the script but came in with ideas of their own. We revisited the overall lighting concepts but our main discussion was focusing on the rape scene. I described to them how I planned to stage the scene and I was happy to hear they had ideas regarding colors and settings to depict the exact mood we were going for. We discussed perhaps using a strobe during the actual penetration but I felt like that would be more theatrical than necessary and I did not want to worry about the effects that strobe lights can have on people.

Next we discussed sound as I was introduced to Nick Dell'Omo as our newly recruited sound designer. I was pleasantly surprised at his preparation and his creative contributions. I explained how important it was for us to pick at least three moments (maybe more) in the play where we could hint to the audience that Davis is guilty. I explained that when he discusses the moment of gaining power and wanting to be touched

as the first moment. The second moment would be when he chokes Cooper at the end of act one. The final moment would be during the rape scene at the moment where he lifts his head up and enacts the same power gesture from act one. Nick's idea was to play a sound at 14000 Hz at each of these moments. The sound would be somewhat jarring to the audience with the intention of planting a psychological seed that something was amiss with Davis. He played the sound and I could not hear it. He explained that after a certain age, adults (most likely those over 40) would not be able to detect sounds at this frequency. Understanding that the adult audiences might not experience this, I decided to avoid going lower so that I could retain the jarring effect from the 14000 Hz level. My head was entertained at wondering if anyone would bring this noise up to me once they saw a performance.

We then discussed music for pre-show and the scene transitions. I informed him that I would like to play a song that could characterize the person who would be next introduced and/or was the focus in the next scene. We also discussed that it could be a song to suggest what was going to transpire in that scene. I was again delighted to hear that from reading the script, Nick already had suggestions of songs to use. I agreed with many of his selections. And when I discussed how my version of the characters would be different than Kirstin's, we tweaked some of the music to better depict my version. The one decision we left open was the song to use during the rape. I informed the designers that I did not want a rape song. In fact, I wanted to carefully select a song for Leigh to use as her theme. This song would be played four times: during the pre-show, during her character's introduction, during the scene when she and Davis have consensual sex and

lastly during the rape. I will describe my thought process surrounding this in greater detail in a later chapter. We agreed to e-mail each other ideas and concluded the very successfully collaborative meeting.

Chapter 3: Dramaturgy/Research

As previously discussed, Kirstin and I had decided that the research component would be handled by our dramaturg, Grant Freeman. We wanted to maximize consistency in the research that was to inform our productions. What would be of particular significance was in *how* each director would interpret the data. Below are a few key facts and figures that were of importance to me and affected choices that I made in the show.

- 1 in 6 (14.8% rape/2.8% attempted rape) women have been raped at least once in their lives. (*Dept. of Justice, 2006*)
- Every 107 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted. (*Dept. of Justice, 2013*)
- Only 16% of all rapes are reported to law enforcement. (*National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center, 2007*)
- Every 21 hours, there is a rape on an American college campus. (*Crisis connection, National College Health risk Behavior Survey. Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000. Warshaw, 1998*)
- 80% of college rape and sexual assaults go unreported. (*National Crime Victimization Survey 2014*)
- Victims of sexual assault are: 3 times more likely to suffer from depression. 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol. 26 times more likely to abuse drugs. 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide. (World Health Organization. 2002)
- Majorities say Millenials are selfish and entitled, but also tolerant, hardworking, and responsible. (*Reason-Rupe Poll, August 6-10, 2014*)

In addition to the information compiled by Grant, I purchased two books that were directly to the Duke Lacrosse case, which inspired the story in *Really Really*. Crystal Mangum, the alleged rape victim in the case, wrote one book, “Last Dance For Grace”.

This book was her life story including an account of what had transpired the night of March 13, 2006.

“I could clearly see that there were at least 20 guys milling around in the backyard. *This couldn't be where I was supposed to be!* I hesitated at first but then told Brian I would be okay and got out of the car.”

She goes on to explain that she had twice been told she would be dancing for a bachelor part of 5 men however once she got to the house, it was more like a frat party of 30. A few paragraphs later she states it was a group of almost 40. These statements all made in the same few pages of her book minimize her credibility with me. Because of this, and since the Leigh in my show will be telling the truth, I make a firm decision to pay special attention to Leigh's confession in my production. We will need to ensure the actress does not appear like she is trying to remember details and it must be clear that she is confident about the facts in spite of being terrified of the result. This will be a tricky blend of emotions to execute but I know Kaelie is up to the challenge.

One other important discussion in the book is Crystal's statements regarding the media and its effect on her and the case.

“People have written reports that did not interview me directly. Why are they more credible than I am? Because defending sexual assault cases is calling into question the accuser's account. It is established that perfect recall of any traumatic event is never exact. It comes down to the two sides fighting as hard as they can to win their freedom. No one ever told me that the media was the main source of power. Those who have the most control and influence over public opinion control the media outlets. All of the media attention felt as traumatizing as being raped. To see people speculate about your credibility, talk about your private medical records, and openly accuse you of lying was incredibly difficult. I have had two years of constant scrutiny. There is no telling how many more years I'll have to relive the trauma. I felt ashamed of what had happened to me.”

Regardless of who is guilty or innocent, these statements ring powerfully true about our current culture. Un-thorough investigations and irresponsible reporting and gossip can be just as traumatic for the parties involved. People's reputations can be made or broken before any fact is proven and the damage to an individual's life and their relationships can be irreversible. I am committed to having my production demonstrate how easily public opinion can be formed and then swayed in an instant. My hope is that the audience will understand the dangers involved in jumping to conclusions and feel the gravity of the loss when someone's dignity has been stripped.

"I screamed, too, hoping someone would hear me but no one came to my rescue. The only thing I stand to gain now is some dignity." – Crystal Mangum.

The other book I consulted was *The Price of Silence*, by William D. Cohan. Cohan, a best-selling author wrote this book as the "definitive, magisterial account" of the Duke Lacrosse rape case. It is indeed a detailed account of the case but one passage taken from a fraternity member's statement encapsulates the personality and flavor of how I will depict the men in this show:

"I was a member of a fraternity that asked pledges, in order to become a brother, to: swim in a kiddie pool of vomit, urine, fecal matter, semen, and rotten food products...we perpetuated a culture of 'pervasive hazing, substance abuse and sexual assault, as well as intoxicating nihilism that dominates campus social life.'"

I will not take it to this extreme but it does inform the utter lack of respect for boundaries and the framing it as a form of entertainment that breeds a lack of accountability and respect as being acceptable.

When first discussing the project, Kirstin mentioned she saw the original production of *Really Really* at the Signature Theatre in Washington D. C. in 2012. Playing Davis was Jake Odmark who happened to be one of Kirstin's best friends from college. On February 18, 2015, Jake graciously spent thirty minutes to answer questions from us as well as share his experience with the play and the rehearsal process. Kirstin and I recorded the audio from the interview and below are some transcribed highlights from the conversation.

Kirstin Riegler Hensley: Tell us about your experience as a cast member of the premiere production of *Really Really* as well as what it was like to have Paul present throughout the entire process.

Jake Odmark: Well first of all, *Really Really* is the most influential piece I have ever worked on. I had the opportunity to work with Paul every day from the audition process to the closing performance. It was his first play ever written. He was changing lines day to day due to how people were reacting to the show. How he gauged people's reactions was during previews he would go out to the lobby at intermission to hear what the audience was saying. If he thought the audience was siding to Leigh or Davis, he tweaked the script to make it more neutral.

Adam Valentine ("Davis", my cast): Did Paul ever elaborate on Natalie? (Natalie is Davis' ex-girlfriend who is mentioned throughout the play but never seen or heard on stage).

Jake: Natalie was originally a character in the show, but Paul then decided that the story wasn't about Davis's past. Having Natalie be a presence would take away focus from the matter at hand. What happened at the party between Leigh and Davis? As an actor, I had to decide what happened with Natalie, but it wasn't important for Paul or any other character to know. It (the play) is about living in the moment. The whole point is everyone assumes and thinks what they want to think no matter what to get what they want. If the rape occurs, then the rest of the play is the same. If the rape doesn't occur, then the rest of the play is the same. Because it is all about what people think. It is a play about narcissism, and getting what you want in any way possible. It is all about what YOU deserve.

Matt Riley ("Jimmy", Kirstin's cast): How does the end sexual assault change the story?

Jake: Everyone is making decisions to get ahead EXCEPT for Davis. He hasn't done anything yet...and when he decides to finally do something, it's the rape. It speaks to the need for instant gratification from Generation Me. For example, you can post a selfie on Twitter right below a selfie of Beyoncé. It puts you on the same plane as a celebrity because you do it mainly to see how many likes you are going to get. Paul is writing about entitlement; what you deserve. He (Davis) is the only character to not get what he wants until the end.

Kirstin: What do you think is the purpose of Grace's monologues?

Jake: The Generation Me theme of the show was extremely important to Paul and the purpose of Grace's monologues was to keep the theme present. The direct address monologues serve as nets thrown to the audience to ask the question: This is where we are. Do you get it? (Referring to the land of Generation Me, social media, and narcissism).

Katie Stoddard (Haley, my cast): How was the relationship between the sisters shown? How did Haley/Leigh influence each other?

Jake: Haley exists to show Leigh's economic background. She is outright in getting what she wants which no other does. She is doing exactly what Paul is writing about and at least she isn't lying about it. She is almost married to it in a sense. It's just another facet to our generation's neediness.

Jorge Bermudez: I believe Haley has the most integrity of all the characters in the play

Jake: You can definitely make that case. And you can also make the case that she's the most hated.

Telos Fuller (Jimmy, my cast): Did you and your cast talk about what was confusing with the script?

Jake: The ambiguity of the play is inherent. The characters in the show only know anything by what is specifically being said to them. They go after what they want all based off hearsay.

Kirstin: What was the most difficult part of the rehearsal process?

Jake: The rape scene definitely. It was difficult because we never rehearsed in order of the show until our first run-through so getting into it was tricky. It was very mechanical at first; almost like a dance. After the first run-through, I was driving home and I just started crying and called the girl who was playing Leigh and she was crying too. We were emotionally hit but in the best way possible. The awkwardness and tension felt between the both of us and the entire cast and crew watching was exactly what we needed to feel. It was GREAT!!!

Jorge: If you could give any last words before we open this weekend, what would they be?

Jake: Make a decision, fight for it and make it clear the entire show.

Chapter 4: Auditions, Casting, & Callbacks

Auditions were held on Saturday, December 6, 2014. In total, we had a total of 40 people auditioning. Kirsten and I were elated at the numbers and it made us feel confident that we would be able to find the necessary people we needed for the fourteen roles to be filled. After the auditions were over, we began to discuss who we were interested in calling back. Having only directed one other production within a college setting, I was not fully prepared for the amount of obstacles and potential roadblocks we would face when deciding who to call back and ultimately cast. Besides Kirstin and myself, the remaining production staff members were almost all comprised of undergraduate students. Not surprisingly, these students had a closer barometer of the behind-the-scenes drama that could affect our productions. What I was not prepared for was how passionate the opinions would be bordering on near boycotts if a particular person were to be cast. For example, one male and female who were in the running for the two leads were a couple but apparently did not like being in shows together. Additionally, Kirstin and I were told that this couple would soon be breaking up and as a result, there was no way they could be in the same cast. Similarly, another couple that was being considered for multiple roles had just broken up and one of them apparently could not be in the same room as the other. Another girl would not be able to be in the same cast a certain male because of his repeated advances towards her making her uncomfortable despite clear rejection. One male is perceived creepy by the women in the department and the teams made it clear they did not want to work with him in spite of his potential fit for a role. Another student's baggage

from previous issues with reliability put his professionalism in question. Still another student had declined a role in the main stage show and one of our team members was vocal about sending the wrong message to the student body if he were to be cast after having broken a main stage rule. Lastly, yet another student came to audition although he was already committed to a main stage production the following semester. The rehearsal schedules would overlap for two weeks putting his eligibility in question. We made no promises to him but we did let him audition. Kirstin and I stated that we might not be interested in some of these people once callbacks were conducted so we expressed to the team that we would cross the casting bridge when we got there.

Before callbacks began we asked Ian Marsh to come in the room. We informed him that we were interested in him being part of the show, however, we did not want to be in the position where it appears that graduate students are enabling any student to break the main stage rules and/or participating in favoritism. We said that this must be his choice and that he needed to gain permission by the end of tomorrow.

Callbacks ran from 3 -6 pm and we ended at exactly 5:59 pm. We were very proud of ourselves for our time management. Grant praised us for how professional we were in running our auditions. He also said he loved what I did at the end where I put the Leigh/Davis pairings in a situation and coached them to play the scene with as much sexual tension as possible. This provided a third dimension to the relationship that I think is critical to the dynamic of the characters.

Casting could have been potentially disastrous because of Kirstin and me wanting the same people. It is also worth noting that there two additional sets of auditions

happening simultaneously for other SALT shows. With all of these variables at play, I fully expected a bidding war for talent. I have been in similar situations that have been fraught with much conflict but I was elated to see this process smoothly and with little conflict.

Jessica Dotson who was casting for her show, *The Comet Hunter* stopped by and said she only had 3 males audition for her show but she only needed one and that she really wanted Michael Oppenheimer. Although both Kirstin and I were interested in him, we agreed to let him go so that Jessica could have at least one person she really wanted. Paul Valley, who was casting for a female version of Faust, stopped by and informed us of the women he was interested in casting, two of which I was also interested in. One student looked a little young for my production so I had no issue with her joining Paul's show. Regarding the other student, we decided that we would let actors decide what show they would like to join should they be cast in more than one. With those decisions made, Kirstin and I were able to focus our efforts in negotiating which director would get which actor. We agreed it would be wise for us to also cast a backup for each role in case someone was ultimately ineligible or unavailable for whatever reason.

We began with casting Leigh. Kirstin stated the name of the actress she wanted to cast that was also one of my top two choices for Leigh. I openly discussed the two actresses I was considering and I stated that one of them felt like she possessed a quality that would be important to Kirstin's production but not to mine. Therefore, I informed her I was ok with giving Kirstin her number one choice and I would cast the other student, Kaelie Ukrop as Leigh.

We proceeded to the role of Davis. Kirstin named another actor that I was also interested in but for another role. I struggled between two men for this role. One actor was physically perfect, but I was unsure of his emotional depth to carry the show and also unsure of his ability to handle the complexity of this character. Although my other option was not the ideal physical type (he was close enough), I had no doubt in my mind that he could handle the nuances of the role and carry the show at this point. This actor was also the boyfriend of one of Kirstin's actors so once I mentioned his name; she was gracious in letting me have him.

Casting Cooper proved to be a little more challenging. One of the actors I was interested in was also Kirstin's first choice. This man was the ex-boyfriend of the actress who was one of my top choices for the role of Grace. I made it clear to the team that if two people ended up being in the same cast, they would have to find a way to work together. This was an important teaching moment we had regarding professionalism. That being said, I did have another strong option for Cooper. Had I not, I would have fought harder for this actor. But since my other choice for Davis was still available, I slotted him in as Cooper thus allowing Kirstin to have her top choice as well. Interestingly enough, Kirstin and Miranda then had some further discussion regarding Cooper, and Kirstin ended up switching her initial choice to the role of Jimmy. Changing her mind, she said she would prefer a different actor, Michael Isaacs to be her Cooper. I wanted Michael for the role of Johnson. We debated over who would get Michael and I mentioned that if he were offered Cooper in Kirstin's production and Johnson in mine, he would choose hers because Cooper is a better/larger part. Therefore, Michael Isaacs became her Cooper.

Next up was the role of Jimmy. Telos Fuller was my front-runner for Jimmy and because I lost Michael Isaacs to Kirstin, she agreed to let me have Telos.

Rounding out the male cast was the role of Johnson. Casting this part proved to be a complicated mess. My top choice for Johnson was an actor who was the back up for the role of Davis in Kirstin's production. Kirstin had cast Ian Marsh as her Davis but he was a question mark because he needed to gain the necessary approvals to participate in our project. We estimated our chances at 50-50 at best. I then cast my actor in the role of Johnson knowing full well I could easily lose him to Kirstin's show. I proceeded to consider my back up. I had been interested in Michael Oppenheimer but since we agreed to let Jessica Dotson have him, I was forced to look at other people I was not originally interested in. There were two other males I had called back for Johnson. One of the males had a slightly better audition than the other, however his build was rather lanky and Janelle brought up that the audience would probably not buy him as being part of a rugby team and would thus stick out like a sore thumb hanging out with these guys on stage. The other actor, Solomon Dixon, did not have a particularly strong audition. He did not make choices during his callback and although I knew this was mostly due to a lack of experience (he was a freshman) versus a lack of ability, I was hesitant about making him the back up to Johnson. Grant mentioned Colin McLaughlin who would be returning next semester would make a great Johnson - which I agreed with but I questioned the fairness in casting someone who did not audition. On the one hand, the only reason he didn't audition is because he wasn't here this semester but on the other hand, I feel guilty in depriving an opportunity to a student who was here and who did go through the audition process.

When casting Grace, Kirstin chose someone who was not on my call back list so there was no conflict there. However, there were many strong opinions about the actor who was one of my front-runners. She was the girlfriend of one of the males Kirstin and I were interested in casting but her reputation preceded her. Almost every single member of the production team stated that she was a problem. She apparently was late to several rehearsals in varying productions and also was poor at communication. She also has a reputation of over-dramatizing medical issues and blowing things out of proportion. I wrestled with listening to the undergrads and allowing them to have a voice and influence me versus wondering how much of their reaction is because they may not be as experienced in handling these situations. I had no direct experience with this actress. Would I/Could I be more successful in managing her? Would she have the same issues with me or would she react differently to me? I decided to confer with two of her current professors and in separate conversations, they both expressed this actress was a lot to handle and was unreliable in attendance and professionalism. The discussion turned to Molly Kauffman who we all agreed had a really strong audition and was second choice for Leigh for both Kirstin and me. Molly was not the physical type I originally had in mind for Grace, however I was very impressed with her acting chops and I easily saw the potential in her successfully playing an alternate version of Grace.

The last character we cast was Haley. I enjoyed Katie Stoddard and I felt she looked like she could be Kaelie's sister. Katie and Kaelie are also roommates and best friends and we acknowledge this would help the chemistry of the show.

The plan was to email the cast lists immediately to ensure each student was

academically eligible and receive all necessary approvals. We would not communicate to anyone what their role is until they have been cleared and all potential role shifting has been completed. We then congratulated each other on a successful audition, callback, and casting process.

It was at this point that my heart sank because I realized I totally had forgotten Rachel Zaccari. She was on my original callback list for Leigh and Haley and at this point, I honestly cannot remember how she was inadvertently omitted. Regardless of whose fault it was initially, I feel it was totally on me to not have caught the error until after the process was over.

I ended the evening still wrestling with:

- 1) Kaelie and Molly. Both actresses gave strong auditions for both roles. Considering physical types, I wondered whether switching these roles would work better. Molly could play Leigh and Kaelie could play Grace.
- 2) Disappointed that I may have to have a less seasoned actor for Johnson. Solomon would clearly be at a disadvantage and his lack of experience/facility I fear will be obvious.
- 3) I am angry with myself for making the mistake of forgetting about Rachel Zaccari and how her being at callbacks may have affected the pairings. Her callback success is impeded by not having the opportunity to read with various configurations.

On Monday, December 8, I conducted a callback for Rachel. I asked her to read for both Leigh and Grace and invited Kaelie to read with her. I gave Rachel an opportunity to read for each character before I gave her any adjustments. After providing feedback, she read for each character two more times, I thanked her for coming and excused her from the

process. Although I did not end up casting her, I was satisfied that I had given her sufficient opportunities and my guilt was assuaged.

After a relatively smooth process with Kirstin, what we both did not foresee would be the issues we would face upon submitting our casting preferences to Shaun McCracken. Both Kirsten and I were surprised to learn the number of students were not, in fact, academically or otherwise ineligible. This was an important lesson in having back-up options when casting a show, particularly in a college environment. Both Kirstin and I had cast actors in the Davis role whose grades met the G.P.A. minimum, however they were ineligible for other reasons. My lead actor had declined a role on the main stage thus making him ineligible to do my show. Being acquainted with this actor, I found the situation odd that he would have auditioned knowing his ineligibility status. I immediately contacted him and asked him if he realized he was ineligible. He responded by saying that he had received permission to perform in a SALT show, which I confirmed with the VCU Head of Performance. Although I had been expecting to have to re-cast him, this particular crisis was averted. As previously mentioned, Kirstin's lead actor was in a similar situation. He was a principal role in a main stage production for next semester but he had recently been reduced to an understudy capacity due to an accident he had had this semester. The leg injury he sustained would preclude him from doing the main stage role, as it would require him to do lots of physical work. However he had auditioned for us without having received permission beforehand. Kirstin and I both expressed to him that we needed him to gain approval as soon as possible before we could make decisions on casting. Casting was even further complicated by the fact that each of us had back-up options that were also

cast in the other production. We did discuss again whether to let the actors decide which production they wanted to be in, however we felt that would create an air of competition and favoritism that was not in the spirit of our collaboration.

One other peculiar loophole came to light regarding the academic eligibility rule. Our audition process was part of the fall 2014 semester, however all rehearsals and performances would take place in the spring 2015 semester. We had a student whose G.P.A. was bubbling under the minimum and he was therefore ineligible to participate in our production. However, in seven days, the fall term's grades would be submitted and it was very possible that this student's G.P.A. would just reach the minimum therefore making him now eligible. At what exact point is the rule in effect when considering a student's eligibility? Kirstin and I decided to wait until all grades were turned in before we made final casting decisions. As a result, we sent this e-mail to all those who auditioned.

"Hello,

Thank you for auditioning for *Really Really*! We are diligently working on casting and final decisions will be made as soon as grades from this semester have been turned in. This is being done as an effort to ensure no surprises happen that may affect the process. Therefore, we will notify those who are cast no later than December 18th. We ask that in the interim, should you decide to audition for other shows, please list this as a potential conflict. We want to thank you for sharing your talents with us and also to tell you that we appreciate your patience!

Have a wonderful break :)

Best,

Kirstin Riegler, Jorge Bermudez and the *Really Really* Team"

In the interim, I had multiple conversations about this situation with various faculty

members. During one conversation with Dr. Noreen Barnes, I expressed to her that the particular student in question was tailor-made for the role I slotted him into. I explained that I usually attempt to give first crack to upperclassmen that may not have been cast (or ineligible to be) in shows on the main stage. My philosophy was to help give as many performance opportunities to these students before they graduate. I am not averse to working with underclassmen at all; I just believe they have time on their side to gain experience. Noreen counseled me that this was educational theatre and that even having one freshman in my cast would be a great opportunity for an actor to learn from more seasoned actors in the program. This was a perspective I had not considered. I thanked her for the advice and decided to fill the role of Johnson with Solomon Dixon, a freshman in the performance track. Little did I know that he would be the surprise of the project for he was one of the best elements of my show both during the rehearsal process and the performances. Solomon brought his own brand of humor to the role and played the serious moments with surprising authenticity. This brought to my attention that we should begin exposing our students to audition preparation as early as possible in our curriculum. For this student was a prime example of someone who did not audition well but knocked it out of the park when doing the role. A huge thank you to Noreen Barnes for she changed the course of my show with that one sage comment. The actor who was originally slated to be in the role of Johnson ended up remaining ineligible to be in my show anyway as his grades did not lift his G.P.A. to the required minimum, thus making his casting a moot point.

When all was said and done, Kirstin and I successfully navigated through many issues that affected the casting process including:

- Students' academic eligibility and the rule loophole
- Broken relationships requiring students to be in separate productions
- Students not receiving the required permissions to participate in SALT shows
- Creating a non-competitive environment and casting according to role size
- Collaborating with directors of other SALT shows and share talent as needed.
- Ensuring educational opportunities were offered to underclassmen

On December 18, 2014, I e-mailed each cast member the following:

Hi _____,

Thank you for auditioning for *Really Really*. I would like to offer you the role of _____.

Please email me back to confirm that you accept. I hope you are enjoying your break so far!

Best,

Jorge Bermudez

Within twenty-four hours, all actors had accepted their roles and my production of *Really Really* was officially underway!

Chapter 5: Rehearsals

On December 18, 2014, this e-mail was sent to my cast:

“Dear cast of *Really Really*,

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

I cannot tell you how excited I am to get started on this show! Please find attached the script to *Really Really*. Here are a few things, I'd like to discuss before we officially start.

1) I'm all for having some much needed rest and relaxation so feel free to memorize a little at a time or just enjoy the holidays and start memorizing after new year's. Either way, please make sure you are completely memorized by the start of next semester.

2) From here on in, please keep all communication regarding our production to yourselves. Because of the societal/psychological research component to this as a thesis project, those of us involved have agreed to a gag order on the inner-workings of our production. Thank you in advance for helping us to preserve the integrity of the experience.

3) I'd like the men to research what it's like being on a college sports team, specifically rugby. Think of the behavior they exhibit, rituals, and any other elements that contribute to the psychology of these guys. There is a movie, I believe, that may be related to this topic - *A Warrior's Heart*. Although I have not yet seen it myself, I do plan on it and will discuss it more if I feel it'll help us understand their psyches any better.

4) For the women, please look into any psychological elements that come out of people who have been abused and also raped. For Grace, look into what it takes to be a law student and a high achieving leader particularly the struggles for a woman without a ton of money.

That's all for now. We will certainly discuss everything when we convene for rehearsals but in the meantime, don't hesitate to contact Page or myself if you have any questions. Like I said, above all else, please make sure you are memorized. This show is important to me not only because it's my thesis but also because the subject matter is close to my heart. Therefore, I will want to concentrate on spending all of our time in the creation of our message, and if you're saddled with trying to remember words/lines, it'll just slow us down. I promise a fun but focused process and I simply cannot wait to work with all of you!

Best, Jorge"

My approach to rehearsal would be in four phases. During the first week, we would be in the discovery phase. This would be comprised of table-work and discussions focusing the actors on what discoveries they make about their characters. I encouraged them to be inquisitive at this stage about not only their characters but of their relationships to others and finally about the character's purpose for existing in the play.

My second phase is the developmental phase, which is a process that possesses three progressive stages.

- 1) Initial blocking – I begin with a rough sketch of entrances and exits and blocking at key moments in a scene. My focus is primarily on developing interesting and appropriate stage pictures that will aid us in storytelling. I also make it clear to my cast that this does not mean I am ignoring the acting and I encourage them to begin the discovery process immediately.

- 2) Stage business. Once the initial blocking is set, I encourage actors to begin making character choices focusing on their objectives as we progress through the scene.

- 3) Immediately following, I begin to focus specifically at my actor's choices in terms of actions, tactics, and subtext within a scene. I guide them towards discovery and engagement with the text.

- 4) I progress to deeper understanding of key moments. I ask my actors to think deeply about the relationships they have with the other characters and begin focusing on their acting partner. I coach them to be in the moment and to listen and respond to what their partner is giving them. My third phase is refinement. This is the point in the process where we begin setting the show. I focus on overall character arc, solving blocking problems, and

tweaking moments that need adjustment in tone, pace, or rhythm. The last phase is tech. I explain that my goal is to have our show set in terms of acting by this point and that we are now only concerned with adding costumes, hair, lights, set, and sound.

In terms of coaching and working with the actors, I find a great sense of ease with Adam Valentine. He was always professional and our initial rapport was one of mutual respect. While I admired Adam's professionalism, I did however want to loosen him up a little for his sake and for the rest of the cast. He was the oldest male in the cast and I took note that the other men took their behavioral cues from him. If the others could see Adam enjoying himself, perhaps that would give permission for the others to relax a little more. This, in turn would allow the actors to feel greater freedom in exploring their characters and overcome any hesitations they may have had. On one particular day, I opened the door to Adam for some playfulness. He immediately took the cue and bantered with me, which he hadn't really done before in this environment during rehearsal time. If we had ever joked around, it was always after a rehearsal. But at this particular rehearsal, he interjected a little of our friendly rapport and this was indeed the key in opening up Solomon to feeling more relaxed overall. It was definitely a bonding moment. As for his acting, Adam always makes new choices and continues to explore which I love about him and he has this natural authenticity that, coupled with his instincts, definitely make him a force to be reckoned with. Adam is also smart so he understands concepts I'm trying to express quickly and he thus saves me time overall which I also very much appreciate.

By contrast, Ethan is a more literal thinker and when I need to coach him, I spend time devising different methods to explain and guide him. He was a bit of a mystery, at

first, in terms of how to best direct him. He began the process fully memorized and I was proud of him for this. But the one thing missing that I do believe he should be aware of at this stage of his learning process, is to think about character decorum, through-lines, and character arc which he did not display at his first rehearsal and I had to remind him of his overall role within the world of the play. We discussed that Cooper is the one who never loses. He possesses the championship mind and is the consummate captain. I expected this to be the base foundation of where to work from but even this wasn't in his body or thought process yet. I like Ethan a lot as a person and he seems to enjoy my sense of humor and we have ease together. He is well mannered, very personable and I can tell he has a great desire to please. He came early to rehearsal and brought pizza for everyone, which was a very warm and bonding thing to do.

I have worked with Kaelie in various capacities and have been her teaching assistant in the junior acting studio. As a result, I am very familiar with her process, which is why even though her progress was at a more finite pace than Adam; I was never really concerned about the end result. I have seen Kaelie go to emotional places in class before but I recognize that she processes information in layers. She must analyze everything first before she executes. This may translate to rigid acting at first but I had every confidence that once this stage of her process was over, she would dive right in to emotional depths.

I have found that with Ethan and Molly, I struggled with balancing my role as a director with that of an educator. In these moments, it served the process more efficiently to specifically choreograph moments that I know will maximize the impact. For example, I directed one actor "Say this line, look down and see the towel, look up say your next line,

pick up the towel, hold it in the US hand and then say your last line.” I wanted to help them find their moments but I didn't always feel that I had the luxury of time.

This is not the case with Adam where I did not ever have to choreograph anything. He intuitively knew what to do and when to do it for maximum theatricality. And if he didn't know it already, he quickly discovered it on his own. He has a gift in finding the moment and landing it. Because of this, however, I find myself consciously reminding myself to make sure I pay enough attention to him so he feels supported and valued and knows I am not taking him for granted.

The biggest surprise to me was Solomon Dixon. For a freshman, he's got great instincts. And once I let him know it was ok to ham it up, he let loose and really started to open up and express more. He's got beginner's habits that I hope to help break such as how to time his choices and to not scream and making everything sound angry. He also had difficulty with one particular line both in terms of proper memorization and delivery.

But he has taken adjustments well and recorded the notes on his phone. He would also send his recordings to his fellow cast members so they would all have their notes as well. I used repetition as a rehearsal technique and had Adam and Solomon deliver a sequence of two lines and repeat it three times in a row so that Solomon could remember as he kept dropping the same line and asked for it repeatedly several times before the exercise. After the exercise, the line was never a problem again. I also explained to him that often times having activity along with saying lines at the same time is distracting because audiences are too focused on physical movements and we then lose the words and the meaning behind them. He took the adjustment and made improvements but we'll need to keep

working on it.

On January 20, 2015, we had a breakthrough rehearsal that perfectly displays the beauty of collaboration. I experimented with the opening of Act 2 Scene 3 by having Solomon play his video game as if it was the championship point so that Adam's entrance really throws him off. Typically, Adam enters the scene and Solomon stops playing and the scene is immediately tense. During this experiment, Adam decided to try and play the video game with him, which suddenly gave the scene an upbeat boost. By enacting this change, it made the rest of the scene sadder for Adam and Solomon losing the video game together became the metaphor for losing their friendship as well. Now, the scene was framed in such a way, that we could not help but feel the full emotional impact as we witnessed the relationship disintegrate before our very eyes. The entire cast and crew cheered and if we had not been inspired previously, this night became the benchmark for all future rehearsals as a display of the cohesive family on a mission to put forth a production everyone could be proud of.

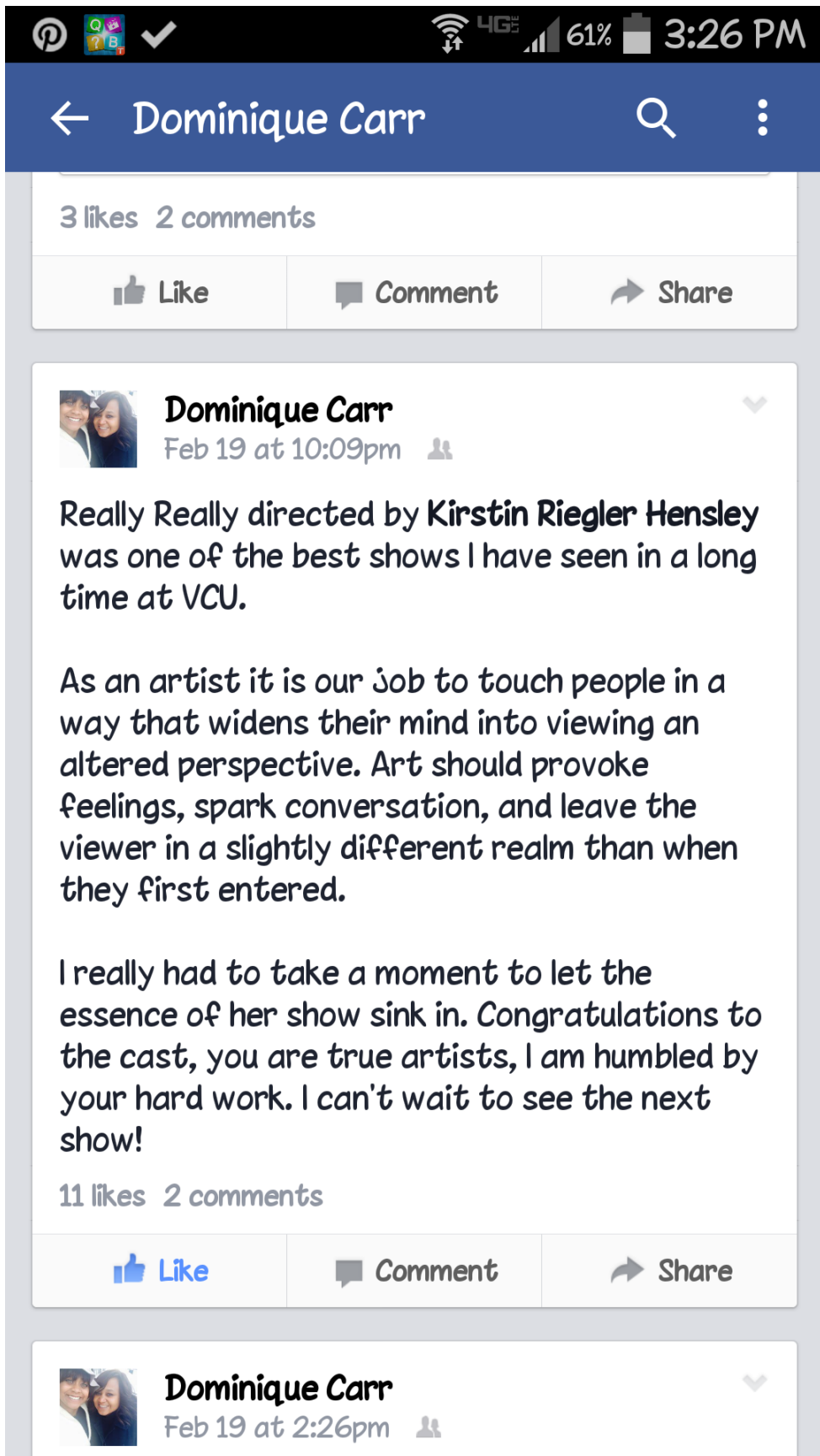
Chapter 6: Talkbacks & Feedback

After each performance, we noticed Facebook postings from various people who had seen one of our productions. Ironically, in true “Generation Me” fashion, we took the advantage of the opportunity to elicit feedback regarding their experience while it was fresh in their minds. It was interesting receiving criticism from both ends of the spectrum and below are two examples given to us by our fellow millenials...

There was one thing I wasn't so certain about and it may be the writing as I had trouble understanding it in Jorge's version as well: the character of Haley. I understand how the actions she takes are important to the plot, but I have a hard time actually believing why she had to go to Davis and Cooper's house in the first place. What is she actually trying to prove by going there? It's not clear to me. I think it might be weakened by the almost too ironic moment of the pendant necklace, but the character lacks a degree of believability. Perhaps there could be a little bit more mining done with this character to heighten her need. I also find it interesting that in the survey it was asked “who was the hero?” and “who was the villain?” In today's world, it seems like the lines between these two ideas are becoming increasingly blurred, especially in a technology generation where the face can hide behind a computer or a cell phone. I tend to think all the characters spend time in both hemispheres, just as we all do in everyday life. That's my observation from seeing both plays.

– Alex Burkart, Theatre Pedagogy/Performance Graduate Student

After Kirstin's opening night, Thursday, February 19, 2015, she came home and noticed that she was tagged in a Facebook status by Dominique Carr, VCU third year BFA Theatre Performance who had just came back from seeing her show.



Regarding this status, Kirstin thanked her for the shout out and inquired if she was definitely going to see my production. She excitedly said that she was and would love to talk about her experience in detail after seeing both shows. Dominique messaged Kirstin on Facebook after seeing my production and a conversation ensued. Below is a sample of the conversation.

Kirstin: So how as the full experience of seeing both shows?

Dominique- It was crazy to see it all come full circle. I enjoyed the show very much and I saw Davis (in Jorge's production) in a whole new light compared to that of your (Kirstin's) Davis. Even though I stand on things not being all black or white, I leaned a lot more towards Kaelie than Adam. The use of body language and double meanings was one of the key components of this (Jorge's production) one. Also, a lot of things were much more over-sexualized I feel compared to your (Kirstin's) show which might have something to do with the themes of "Generation Me" that screamed out at me this time.

Kirstin: All in all did both shows speak to you?

Dominique: Yes they really did. I think this needs to be a travel production there are so many people that need to see these shows. There's so much room for open dialogue and discussion especially at colleges and high schools. It's amazing how perception can be so easily manipulated using the same dialogue and basic blocking. It's incredible and actually comments on how we view media as well. I was talking to Megan (Mock) and Vincent (Ramirez) about how clear each of your visions was. It was evident throughout the show what the theme was and I loved the perplexity of the gray areas in life. When I watched the shows, I realized that not everything in these traumatic cases is black and white. There are so many little details that go into these cases. There's so much that can be learned here and I'm still trying to figure it all out. It was amazing to see the layers in the show and so many hidden agendas and underlining meanings in words and phrases.

Kirstin: Our goal was to not be better than the other show just different. Did you think that came across?

Dominique: Yes, that is exactly what I picked up on. I wouldn't have missed it for the world I haven't been able to stop thinking about it since I left. That's real art.

Marcelo Guzman, a first year performance major who saw every show commented "It was such a great experience and there was always something new in each show. I did not think I would feel so much emotion after the final show, after seeing it so many times, but I kept realizing that this happens in so many campuses and we don't even realize! But I truly thank you and Jorge for shedding light on a sensitive topic that we all needed to know

about. I remember asking Riley, Kaelie, Adam, and Ian about how it was to see each other's rape scene. Riley and Adam both said that it's always hard to see something like that even though you know it's coming. Riley said that she was nervous to see the rape scene, because she had heard that it was a lot more intense, and it was even harder to watch. It's never easy to watch something like that."

Kirstin and I also held talkbacks after each performance to elicit audience response to the issue of campus sexual assault and also to the idea of "Generation Me." Discussions were varied but some of the most interesting comments include:

"I felt this was a show about the fact we are living in a time where we place blame on everyone but ourselves and our nature is selfish and we will do what we need to create a life or survive."

Another woman quickly added: "I've always known there are two sides to everything. It is so, so frustrating what people are capable of lying about. In seeing both productions, I just feel sad we are a Generation Me, and what we will do for our 'mes' makes me worry about humanity and what the next generation will be taught. We will either learn the detrimental things we can do and try to teach; or teach what we've been doing. I don't know."

After this comment, I probed the audience on whether watching this production and/or Kirstin's had affected their outlook on campus rapes currently in the news and many people nodded their heads. I remarked how important I felt our responsibility was to be seekers of the truth. We need to be smart and not readily influenced by how events are immediately depicted. One of the key messages of this production is to demonstrate the damage a society can inflict on each other by not taking the time to be thorough before we react to anything. One of the most important distinctions I see about this generation is that

our response time is quicker. With the advent of social media, the good news is that word can be spread instantly around the world. The downside is that we seem to be breeding a culture that is becoming more efficient but less accurate.

I was curious about those who had seen both Kirstin's and my productions. I reiterated that although that what they just observed could serve as a stand-alone production, it was, in fact, part of a thesis project designed to foster discussion on the impact of performance on social opinion. I asked if anyone wanted to comment on who or where the blame lied in the crime detailed in this play.

A woman raised her hand and said: "Leigh told the truth – it was in the body language that portrayed her own reaction to the party. It shows all sides & how it can turn one's opinions into a reality by possibly refocusing people's intentions. People's views are their views because of how they work/think. Technically no one did anything to help but who's to say that this is how you help? As for Leigh and Davis, a fate isn't deserved; just what people make out of what happens."

A male audience member remarked on having seen Kirstin's production first and then mine. "Davis became less empathetic. Leigh got more empathetic. Jimmy became more likable, less believable." "They got what they wanted/set themselves up for."

Another male stated: "I'm not so sure anyone deserved what he or she got in the end. I was mad at Davis but I am not sure he should have gone to jail after Leigh showed her other side."

My heart skipped a beat as soon as this man finished his comment. One of the last creative elements I had worked on was answering the question of whether to depict Davis' fate at

the end of the play or leave it open-ended. And if I were to make this part of the story, what would that fate be? Considering that in my version, Davis was a rapist, I decided I did not want him to get away with the multiple assaults. At the eleventh hour, I directed Adam to kneel on the floor and put his hands together as if they were shackled. I was eager to see if anyone would interpret that stage picture as a suggestion that Davis was arrested and would face the consequences of his crime. Thus, this man's comment about Davis going to jail was incredibly gratifying about a piece of my direction that I had been unsure about. I called upon one more female who stated that she was a sociology major at VCU: "Yes, this production made me 100% sure he did it. I hated him at the end."

I thanked everyone for his or her comments and feedback and for supporting this project. As people rose from their seats and prepared to leave the theatre, I overheard a woman say: "Yes, this was incredible. Actions are stronger than words." At that moment, I was overcome with a sadness I have often experienced when a production closes. But I was soon taken out of it, when a VCU performance major came up to me on stage and hugged me. This is a man who I was acquainted with, however I had never been his instructor or teaching assistant. He related to me that a year ago, he was involved in an incident that almost exactly mirrored the story in the play. He confessed he was the "Cooper" of the situation and that for a year he had a concrete perspective on those events until he saw my show. He questioned whether he had done his due diligence in finding the truth. I quickly told him how sorry I was for causing him any discomfort but he stopped me, hugged me again and with tears in his eyes said, "No. Thank *you*. You have opened my eyes and I see the importance of what you did tonight. And for that I am grateful. Thank you." With

tears in my eyes, I gave him a final hug then looked at him and said, “You are so very welcome. Thank you for letting me know this. And I hope everything turns out ok with your situation.”

I feel I can contribute to the improvement of society through the plays I direct but on some level, it always catches me by surprise to discover the power artists truly have to affect people. My heart was full knowing we were changing someone’s life for the better and I was proud of everyone involved to have had this positive impact on our audiences.

Chapter 7: Post-mortem

One of the items Kirstin and I discussed was having a post-mortem once both shows had closed. It was important to us as directors to understand the actors' complete journey within rehearsing and performing their own production as well as viewing the other. Having our assistant directors and stage managers there was also imperative for us so we could gain another set of feedback from another perspective. In order to get the details that we needed, Kirstin and I met prior to meeting with the casts to compile a list of definite questions that we wanted to ask.

On February 23, 2015, we assembled both casts and crews in the basement of the Singleton Performing Arts Center. This was the only time they had ever met to discuss the show and their experience in full disclosure or at least we hoped that was the case. We set the stage by welcoming to the post-mortem and thanking them for their participation in one of the most important parts of our thesis. We said that we wanted their opinions to be as truthful as possible and therefore we asked for them let us know if anyone did not want to be quoted in our thesis. Everyone gave his or her permission to be quoted. We told them we felt closer to everyone having now seen each other's productions and in light of that, we emphasized that this would be a safe place for everyone to let their voice be heard. We asked them to nevertheless think about what they were going to say because we believed they were smart and articulate and we trusted them to express themselves in a positive way. This being so, our icebreaker of the conversation was bringing attention to the previously agreed upon gag order to see if they had honestly followed through. Every

person responded that they had complied with the gag order and had not talked to each other during the entire process except for the actors playing Davis, Ian Marsh and Adam Valentine. Kirstin noticed that they gave each other a look and laughter ensued. They both confessed that they did speak, however, only regarding the script and Paul's writing. We weren't very surprised being that these guys are best friends outside of the show naturally sparking a little skepticism.

We then asked how it felt working on a show not knowing what the other cast was doing with the same script. Riley MacIsaac (Leigh in Kirstin's production) immediately took the floor. "Sometimes I forgot there was another cast and I would have liked to have been able to talk to them. It felt a little divided. However, I understand why it had to be that way." Michael Oppenheimer and Carmen Wiley who played Johnson and Haley in Kirstin's cast responded with similar answers. They both were slightly intimidated by their counterparts (Solomon Dixon and Katie Stoddard in my cast) and wanted to make the best choices they possibly could knowing that Solomon and Katie would naturally shine. This triggered Miranda Tower (Assistant Director for Kirstin's production) with her opinion on the matter. "It ran the risk of being competitive because who wouldn't want to know if the actor playing the same role was making similar choices." Adam mentioned that he had had several conversations with me about whether Kirstin and I were communicating throughout the process. When we probed, Adam stated that he kept having these conversations with me not in a competitive sense but since he knew the point of having two concepts were to leave the audience with different perspectives so he would often check in with me mainly because he wanted to make sure he was not doing the same things

as Ian was doing. He was concerned that the audience would not be walking away with the most valuable experience. To his credit, he confessed that during one of our conversations, I assured him that the other show was going to do what they needed to do and that he needed to trust me that we will handle our responsibility in making the most solid entry to our half of the thesis. It was interesting to me that Ian did not feel the same way. He responded that he was not worried at all that he and Adam would play Davis the same way because in the beginning of the process Kirstin had a talk with him that he had to be as honest as you can be with your character and trust that Adam will be different. Telos Fuller (Jimmy in my production) mentioned that Matt Riley (Jimmy in Kirstin's cast) has been in his acting class and that he is one of his favorite people to act with. He often felt in his head what is Matt going to do in this scene. And he almost tried to make decisions that he would make because he felt they would be better than the ones he would make. But eventually he thought that they are different type of actors so he realized they would probably be different Jimmies and that neither one would be better than the other, just different. Similar to Ian's response, Matt stated that he did not think about what Telos was doing at all and in fact he often forgot there was another show rehearsing at the same time. Carmen added that when she first saw the cast lists go up, she was Katie Stoddard's name in my cast and in her mind she thought "that's perfect" because that's exactly how she saw the character of Haley. Consequently, she began the rehearsal process acting like how Katie would play the role and it didn't work in terms of her relationship with Leigh. She had to reconcile how to embody Haley in her own way and once that happened, it started to click and she felt comfortable in not trying to be Katie Stoddard and to trust her own

characterization.

We asked how it was watching the other show and wondered whether my cast had a different experience being that they watched Kirstin's production on the Sunday matinee and then had to perform themselves that night. Adam Valentine remarked that right before the start of Kirstin's show he was very nervous and stated:

“Riley and Connor came out laughing at the top of the show and I was like, this is so weird. It was so cool to see the differences but at the same time it was so foreign because for the past month you're watching certain people portray these roles and you feel like that is the way the characters should be played. It was so cool at the end to see that they were so different and it really really worked!”

Riley added that in the back of her mind you're feeling one scene (the way she played it in Kirstin's production) but watching another. Rachel Elder (Kirstin's PSM) confessed it was hard for her to watch my cast. She did not feel she could have worked on my show because of the concept. It worked out for her that she worked on Kirstin's. She added that while watching my production, there were moments where her hands were shaking and she didn't know she could sit through the talk back afterwards. And she had seen some of our run-throughs and she had also been talking to my stage manager, Page throughout the entire process. That's how amazing the show was to her. I had an interesting reaction to this because I felt simultaneously proud and another emotion that I am still not able to pin point but it straddles between concern and guilt. My feelings quickly turned to definitive guilt as soon as Connor stated, “I'm just going to be very honest. I thought the rape scene (in my show) was too much...way too much. It was so disturbing. I felt sick afterwards

and a lot of people did. It was just way too much.” Miranda interjected that although she felt everyone involved “killed it” she stated she doesn’t like this show. “I don’t like the message of it. I don’t like it, which is part of the reason why I was so excited to work on it because you don’t always like what you’re doing. And I was really interested to see how the message would come out of this show.” She added that both productions did something good which was opening a discussion and she felt that is what’s most important. However, she feels that the sexual assault being on stage is a directorial choice. It’s written in the script but you don’t always use the blocking in the script. To make that choice, she said there has to be a reason for it. And she didn’t think the reason could stem from the idea of "Generation Me."

“I don’t think that the reason the rape should be portrayed on stage should be because of selfishness. Because that could have easily been her stealing or her shoplifting or her killing someone’s dog because the dog kept shitting on her lawn. Whatever it is, you can portray that any way you want to. So in order for the rape to be portrayed on stage in the most effective manner possible, I think we needed to talk more about sexual assault.”

She further commented that by choosing to write a rape scene, she questioned whether the playwright was thoughtless (or not) because she feels the shock value was misused.

Kirstin then asked if Miranda felt the play would have sufficed without it. Miranda at first replied, yes but then quickly added maybe not without it but it would have sufficed with perhaps the implication of it. Her reasoning is that because 25% of the audience (according to one statistic one in four women have been victims of sexual assault) was

survivors, all they needed to see was a subtler scene implying that the rape occurred.

Matt added that he was in full support of what Miranda said and that maybe he needed to see it to come to the conclusion that the rape was used as a plot device and not so much as a means to get awareness out there.

“Going through the process, I didn’t really pick up on it. But when I saw the other show, it made me incredibly uncomfortable. It really sunk into me. Seeing Jorge’s production was sensory overload for me. I shut down. I couldn’t deal with it. I had to walk away. I had to be gone. And maybe that’s what needed to happen for me to fully understand where I sat with the show.”

At this point, Adam shared his perspective regarding his belief as an artist.

“There are so many subjects that get slid under the rug or not get talked about or limit the severity that is shown. And everything is being censored nowadays. And I think it’s made to be such a big deal because it’s not given the full effect and because we’re not actually committing to telling the story. If we were to do the rape behind the couch – I think it’s one thing for me to sit in the theatre and have to watch it and know you can’t leave because that’s jarring and I believe people in these circumstances get truly affected and it makes them think twice for the rest of their lives. I also think it’s shown in other works of literature or art or movies or television – the things that go to the extremes is powerful but if it’s simplified the message wouldn’t make that much of an impact. As an actor and a person, I feel bad

that I was a part of something that made you feel sick but I feel we have to show it and if you censor it then what's the point of delivering the message.

Matt countered with:

“If this was a film, I can stop watching. I can stop a film. And specifically with rape, we're on a college campus and I know we had a fair number of survivors in the audience to be sitting there watching it and knowing that it could have very well have been like that for them, I can't stand by it. I can't say using that to further the discussion – it didn't change my opinion of rape at all. It was a little bit excessive for me.”

Rachel: “I have a friend who was a victim of sexual assault and saw both of the shows. And she has not really gone to counseling for this and it's been a huge part of her life affecting her and this show got her to a place where she went to student health to for the first time to deal with all this emotion and this story paralleled what she went through. Positive things came out of this and I don't think the rape was overlooked because of how we set it up with the disclaimers” (we had signs in the lobby cautioning people that there the show would contain a scene with graphic sexual assault.)

Miranda: “I completely agree there were positive things that came out of it. But I think positive things would still have come out of it had it been less severe and had I not know personally myself countless people who had really dangerous experiences watching such a graphic thing on stage. And I

think the difference with watching a murder on stage –which is also a horrific thing – is that it’s so far from my life. I’m a lot more likely to be sexually assaulted and so this hits a lot closer to home. So they are not the same thing.”

I asked Miranda to clarify if she felt that it’s because murder and rape are not the same “thing” or that they are not the same thing to experience for her. I asked her what if somebody close to her had been murdered and this play was then about murder? She interrupted and said that it’s just not the same prevalent issue. I commented that this was interesting to me considering all the gun violence that has hit our country in recent years.

Connor Hagerty (Grace in Kirstin’s production) chimed in by saying that rape hits such a different nerve because it can happen at any second in a relationship and you have to live with it. “It’s degrading and the person that feels like garbage afterwards is the victim and having to see someone be put into such a place especially when you’ve experienced it brings you back to that horror.”

Rachel asked how we could have done it better. Miranda replied,

“I think that there didn’t need to be music (referring to my production).

And I think there didn’t need to be a gunshot? And I think there didn’t need to be freeze frames. And I didn’t there needed to be lights on for the audience taking us away from the personal experience because I was having a fucking panic attack and the lights came up and I don’t mean to be disrespectful.”

I interjected at this point that it was scripted to have the lights come up in the house at that

time but Miranda retorted that it didn't have to be that way because Kirstin's production didn't have stage it this way.

After the immense pride I felt throughout this process, I was shocked by my own very personal reaction to Miranda's feedback. I knew that everything I had learned in my graduate school career was about to be encapsulated in this one teaching moment. I told myself to relax as Miranda spoke. I considered whether to be in the moment and let my thoughts come out as honestly as they could but I also was concerned that my anger would color my words in such a way that it would end up alienating this student. I repeatedly reminded myself that she was young and that I needed to phrase myself carefully with the goal of sharing with her my thought process and keep my anger in check. I explained to the casts that I was a survivor of sexual assault. And as a survivor, I was intimately familiar with the challenge of accurately depicting an event in a manner where someone could fully understand the horror of being assaulted without it actually having it happen to him or herself. The choices that I made were honest and I spent hundreds of hours going over the details of the rape scene considering all potential viewpoints that I could possibly imagine. And I landed with this scene staged in the most honest manner possible. I assured her no choice was made carelessly or for the sole intent of presenting shock theatre. I apologized profusely for creating anything that may have caused them pain. To be honest, when I was your age, I would never have even gone to see a show about assault. I just was not ready. I would have made up a lie and said I was sick or done whatever I needed to do to avoid going through the experience again. I knew I was in a sensitive place and I would not have the courage yet to face it for several more years. I added that I hoped someday she

would understand the reasons behind the way the scene was staged. I wrestled with whether to say more. And truth be told, my anger was still brewing and my brain was busy processing the emotions I was feeling. I wonder if I could have handled the conversation differently.

Later that night, more ideas came to me and I was overcome with regret that I did not grab the opportunity to express them. What I truly wanted to say was this: Regarding the music played during the scene, please understand this was not meant to musicalize a rape. This song was carefully chosen as Leigh's theme. Look at the lyrics to "Lovefool" by the Cardigans and you will find direct correlation to what happens with and to her character. That song is played in the pre-show, it is played during the consensual sex and it is finally played during the rape to underscore Leigh's loss of control, reclaiming her power, and her ultimate sacrifice to survive. If I wanted to shock the audience, I would have chosen a song through Davis' eyes. But that is the very reason I did not choose a gangsta rap song or some loud thrashing heavy metal tune, because the dissonance of "Lovefool" was necessary to demonstrate the irony.

Regarding the overall staging and the intensity of the scene, my direct responsibility is not to you or those who are already sensitive to this subject. For you already possess the empathy and the good will to be a person who would never commit this crime. My direct responsibility therefore is to the rest of the community. The majority of the world who is quite ignorant about the despair one feels when this happens. Those are the people who are not already sensitive to rape. And you won't succeed (in my opinion) in raising awareness to this category of people unless you show them with uncompromising

integrity and authenticity the horror of rape. You can describe the Mona Lisa to hundreds of people but it will never compare to actually seeing it in person. And if you can't see it in person, then the next best thing is to show them a picture. And that picture needs to be high resolution without hiding a single element. In this way, the rape scene is that picture. Because, obviously out of respect for the human condition we're not going to assault the audience, the only way we can hope to really sensitize them is to be as honest as possible. So my rape scene is for this group of people. And if they are shocked, hurt, disgusted by it, I apologize on one tiny level. But if you going through that experience even results in one future rape being prevented; or if even one person comes out of it more aware than they were when they entered the theatre, then I make no apologies. However, although my *direct* responsibility is not to you, my *overall* responsibility is. Because it's for you, for me, and for all other survivors that this will ultimately help. It is like being a survivor of rape and being the only witness to the prosecution. As much as it hurts me to ask you to relive it again, it is critical that it happens just one more time in order to guarantee the perpetrator is punished. In summary, I did not approach the rape as a scene in a play, rather it was a call to action to all of those potential rapists or unaware by-standers to wake up and realize we are human and we have the right to safety and dignity and we will not remain powerless. These are the words I wished I had said that evening.

At work the next day, a freshman student noticed that I was pre-occupied. I told her I was conflicted about the effect the staging of my rape scene was having on audiences and wondered if it was too intense or if it came across without purpose. I was completely taken aback by her reaction particularly how emphatic she appeared. I asked her if she

would email me her thoughts and she agreed as long as she could be kept anonymous. I agreed and fifteen minutes later she emailed me the following review:

“The production of *Really Really* on Sunday night directed by Jorge Bermudez was extremely powerful and left a large impact on not only me personally but also those around me. As I was leaving the theater, I observed the guys who saw this production as they left with their heads hanging down and refusing to make eye contact with any women. This made me hope that they realized that this was something that could happen to anyone and that anyone is capable of doing something this horrible. This production also spoke to me because being a victim myself, I understood Leigh’s desire to get her power back after she was taken advantage of. She wanted to show Davis that she was stronger than her circumstances and would not allow him to dictate her life. While the final scene with Davis and Leigh was graphic, it was not without purpose. This scene was not about sex or rape but more importantly it was about a struggle for power. Both Davis and Leigh are trying to gain power over the other person, which leads to the less than pleasant conflict at the end of the show.”

Regardless of her point of view, I was incredibly impressed at the insight this young lady had into my show. I was in a state of shock for a moment as I reflected that only a few hours before, I was questioning whether I got my point across describing the choices behind my rape scene. Additionally, I was consumed with guilt and I could only hope to have enlightened a student and perhaps lessened her pain regarding her experience watching my show. So in one fell swoop, this fifteen-minute conversation with a freshman student eradicated any guilt I had had. By lending me her thoughts, she reminded me that I cannot control someone’s experience and it is unhealthy for me to feel responsible for something I cannot control. I had been hoping to bring awareness to people with my production and perhaps heal some emotional wounds and create some hope for our society’s future, but I was absolutely stunned by this one person’s comments. I felt my entire graduate career culminating in this very moment for she had just saved me as much as I had maybe saved her and that feeling...makes the world for me.

Conclusion

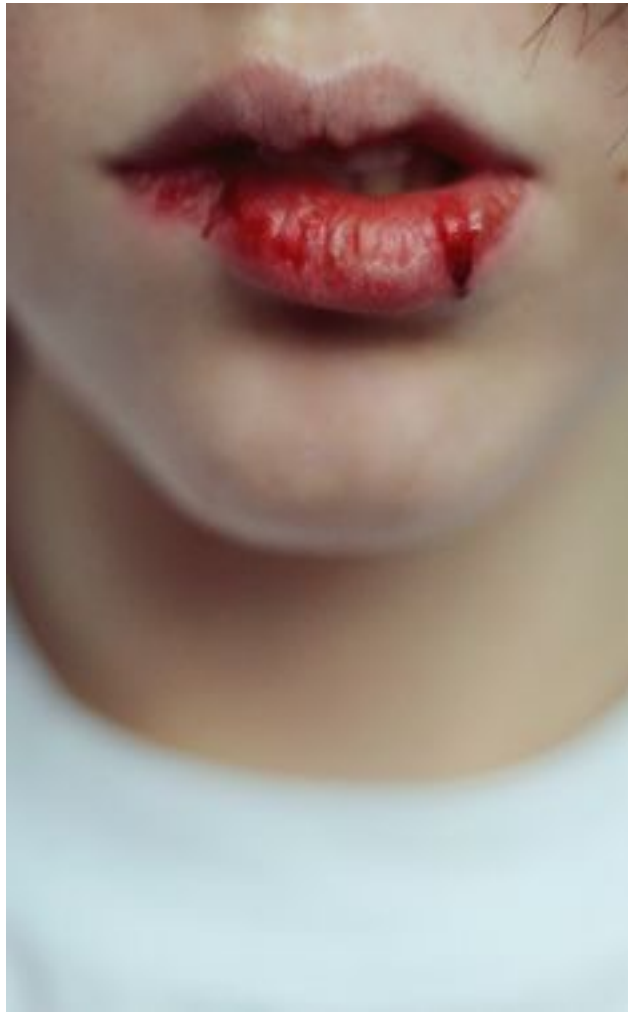
Throughout this process, I was overcome with great pride at the teamwork, talent, and dedication that everyone involved had displayed. A final quote from our dramaturg Grant Freeman who immediately after watching our productions expressed the following: “I think there are three types of thesis shows. First type it is done and you forget about it other than it was done and it was your thesis. Second type is the kind that changes the director’s life. The third type is the one that will live as a moment in people’s memories for years and that is yours.”

As I reflect on the experience, I can fully appreciate all of the experiences in the class room both as student and instructor coupled with my journey as a director fuse together to help me achieve the defining moment of my graduate career. For certain, I can guarantee that my time at VCU has most importantly taught me how to connect with people on an authentically deep level that I have not truly experienced in any other capacity. Thank you, VCU for giving me the opportunity to practice the gift of theatre.

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***Really Really* by Paul Downs Colaizzo**

A Dramaturgy Packet

Grant Freeman

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A Table of Statistics

Note: Statistics can be wonderful things. They can recognize trends, predict probability, and understand the measurement of serious issues. Statistics are important in the understanding major social issues, financial issues, and human problems. They can be incredibly beneficial. They can also be extremely dangerous. Any given statistic can run into a large number of pitfalls. Statistics can be skewed due to outliers, the average might mean something different (Is it a mean, median, or mode), means can be based on false data/evidence, the number of people surveyed could be too large or too small, could be too biased (If you asked 100 people in Wisconsin who is the best football team, Green Bay would be really popular), Sampling polls could be skewed, they could have asked the wrong questions, leading questions (The difference between: will you be voting for Obama and will you be voting for Obama if he cheated on Michelle), or any other from a slew of issues. In the West Wing, Will Bailey (Joshua Malina) once said in regards to focus group polling, “60% is 6 out of 10 in a focus group. You can change one mind, it’s a dead heat. You change two, it’s a landslide.” Even statistics based in fact can be wrong. For example: The United States had 4% of the world’s population, but 25% of the world’s prison population, a staggering statistic, but even in this case, while we can be sure about the number of prisoners in the US, other countries don’t keep the same records, other countries don’t have censuses like ours and so while the statistic points out a real problem, it also isn’t entirely true. With all of this being said rather than a glossary of terms, this first section is a glossary of statistics and facts. I try to list all of the studies and for some go into a little detail, but remember statistics can be like people and as Dr. House said, “everybody lies.” (All statistics are based on the United States).

Victims

1 in 6 (14.8% rape/2.8% attempted rape) women have been raped at least once in their lives. (*Dept of Justice, 2006*) Of all other statistics on the subject the number is usually between 1 in 5 and 1 in 6.

1 in 33 (3%) men have been raped at least once in their lifetimes. (*CDC, 1998*)

Only 16% of all rapes are reported to law enforcement. (*National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center, 2007*)

An average of 293,066 victims of 12 years or older are raped or sexually assaulted each year. (*Dept. of Justice, 2013*)

Every 107 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted. (*Dept. of Justice, 2013*)

Times of year: From a 1993-2010 study, Summer has the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, Fall is 10% lower than Summer, Winter 9% lower, and Spring 6% lower. (*Dept. of Justice, 2014*)

As of 2013, sexual assault has fallen by more than 50% since 1993 (a difference of 5.5 million Americans). (*Dept. of Justice, 2013*)

15% of sexual assault and rape victims are under age 12, 29% are aged 12-19, 44% are under age 18. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

Girls aged 16-19 are 4 times more likely to be victims of rape, sexual assault, or attempted rape than the rest of the general public. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

In College

For college students, the offender is known to the student 80% of the time. (*National Crime Victimization Survey 2014*)

60% of rapes on college campuses occur with a perpetrator who is an acquaintance of the survivor. 32% are romantic partners, 8% are unknown/strangers. (*Zinzow & Thompson, Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma, 20, 711-725 2011*) The offender has a weapon 10% of the time. (*National Crime Victimization Survey 2014*)

80% of college rape and sexual assaults go unreported. (*National Crime Victimization Survey 2014*)

One in four college women report surviving rape or attempted rape at some point in their lifetime. These are anonymous reports on multi-campus surveys sampling thousands of college students nationwide (*Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006*). This rate has remained the same since studies in the 1980s (*Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987*).

The highest sexual assault risk situation for college women is after they become voluntarily intoxicated (*Kilpatrick, National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center, 2007*).

Every 21 hours there is a rape on an American college campus. (*Crisis Connection. National College Health Risk Behavior Survey. Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000. Warshaw, 1998.*)

Men are more likely than women to assume that a woman who drinks alcohol on a date is a willing sex partner. 40% of men who think this way also believe it is acceptable to force sex on an intoxicated woman. (*Crisis Connection. National College Health Risk Behavior Survey. Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000. Warshaw, 1998.*)

In a study done at University of North Dakota, 31.7 percent of participants said they would act on “intentions to force a woman to sexual intercourse” if they were confident they could get away with it. When adding the word “rape” and asked whether they would act on “intentions to rape a woman” with the same assurances they wouldn’t face consequences, just 13.6 percent of participants agreed. (*North Dakota, Denying Rape but Endorsing Forceful Intercourse: Exploring Differences Among Responders*, Nov. 2014)

Fewer than 1 in 5 female student (16%) and nonstudent (18%) victims of rape and sexual assault received assistance from a victim services agency. (*National Crime Victimization Survey 2014*)

Offenders

More than 50% of all rape/sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred within 1 mile of their home or at their home. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

(67% of rapes occur at night between 6pm and 6am. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

The average age of a rapist is 31 years old. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

52% are white. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

22% of imprisoned rapists report that they are married. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

In 1 in 3 sexual assaults, the perpetrator was intoxicated — 30% with alcohol, 4% with drugs. (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)

Reporting

Out of every 100 rapes: 68 go unreported. 32 get reported to the police (Justice Department, *National Crime Victimization Survey: 2008-2012*). 7 will lead to an arrest (FBI, *Uniform Crime Reports, Arrest Data: 2006-2010*). 3 are referred to prosecutors (FBI, *Uniform Crime Reports, Offenses Cleared Data: 2006-2010*). 2 lead to a felony conviction, which means out of 100 rapes, 2 rapists will spend a single day in prison (*Department of Justice, Felony Defendants in Large Urban Counties: 2009*).

According to the American Medical Association, sexual violence, especially rape, is considered the most under reported crime in American history.

The majority of rapes and sexual assaults perpetrated against women and girls in the United States between 1992 and 2000 were not reported to the police. Only 36 percent of rapes, 34 percent of attempted rapes, and 26 percent of sexual assaults were reported. Reasons for not reporting assault vary among individuals, but one study identified the following as common: Self-blame or guilt, Shame, embarrassment, or desire to keep the

assault a private matter, humiliation or fear of the perpetrator or other individual's perceptions, Fear of not being believed or of being accused of playing a role in the crime, Lack of trust in the criminal justice system. (*Rennison, C.M. Rape and Sexual Assault: Reporting to Police and Medical Attention, 1992–2000. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 2002*)

Effects of Rape

Victims of sexual assault are: 3 times more likely to suffer from depression. 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol. 26 times more likely to abuse drugs. 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide. (*World Health Organization. 2002.*)

Millennials

Millennials are likely the most studied generation to date. According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, there are plenty of them to study, 80 million plus (the largest cohort size in history). There are data to find pretty much whatever you are looking for, as the data are varied and sometimes contradictory. In fact, Millennials are full of contradictions, which, of course, may explain the youth of any generation. Most consistent is that this generation is technically savvy, almost as if it has a digital sixth sense. A wired, connected world is all that Millennials have ever known.

They are considered optimistic, with 41% satisfied with the way things are going in the country, compared with 26% of those over 30. Optimism abounds despite the many tragic events that have shaped this generation, such as 9/11, terrorist attacks, school shootings like Columbine, the 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami, and hurricane Katrina. Political, economic, and organizational influences include the 2000 election, the impeachment of a president, the recession and the fall of Enron to name a few.

MOST DIVERSE GENERATION

Young people are more tolerant of races and groups than older generations (47% vs. 19%), with 45% agreeing with preferential treatment to improve the position of minorities. This may be attributable to the diversity of the generation itself, which recalls that of the silent generation. The shifting population is evidenced with 60% of 18 – 29 year olds classified as non-Hispanic white, versus 70% for those 30 and older. This reflects a record low of

whites, with 19% Hispanic, 14% black, 4% Asian, and 3% of mixed race or other. Additionally, 11% of Millennials are born to at least one immigrant parent.

MULTITASKING REDEFINED

Millennials are considered multitaskers extraordinaire, though brain science tells us that multitasking is a myth. More likely, they are apt to switching tasks quickly enough to appear to be doing them simultaneously. When it comes to heavy media multitasking, studies show greater vulnerability to interference, leading to decreased performance. Some studies suggest that this generation is rewiring the brain with extensive multitasking training, evidenced by the teenager who can simultaneously play video games, watch TV, and do homework. They are retraining the brain to reduce the performance deterioration of multitasking by increasing the speed of information the brain processes. This rewiring allows multiple tasks to be processed in more rapid succession. This activity and research suggest that our brains are evolving.

SELF

Popular opinion is that Millennials are more caring, community oriented, and politically engaged than previous generations. Psychologist and Gen Y researcher Jean Twenge contradicts these assumptions. She and her colleagues find that today's youth are more interested in extrinsic life goals and less concerned for others and civic engagement. They are described as overly self-confident and self-absorbed.

This generation masters self-expression, with 75% creating a profile on a social networking site, 20% posting a video of themselves online, 38% with one to six tattoos, and 23% with a piercing in some place other than an earlobe. There is also a trend toward personal branding, which, on its surface, appears self-promoting. Looking a bit deeper reveals a method for young people to identify their passions and determine the most expedient path forward, rather than having others set a path for them.

MORE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Millennial's main sources for news are television (65%) and the Internet (59%). Lagging behind are newspapers (24%) and radio (18%). Different from the youth of the two previous generations, parents have considerable influence on Millennial's political views. In one study of young American leaders, 61% listed parents as most influential, far in advance

of public leaders (19%) and the media (12%). Faith leaders and celebrities ranked as having minimal or least influence.

Millennials are never far away from their next text, with 80% sleeping with their cell phone next to the bed. For some, this bed is in their parents' homes, as 13% have "boomeranged" back because of the recession after living on their own. Thirty-six percent say they depend on financial support from their families.

Many Millennials have grown up with parental support and encouragement and have experienced relatively comfortable lifestyles. Approximately 20% of American Millennials living in poverty have not been so privileged.

Nearly half of Millennials feel they may be worse off than their parents. Health trends indicate that Millennials could be the first generation in over a century to see their lifespan level off and even decline, with obesity becoming epidemic.

THE STUDENT

Millennials score high on IQ tests. They also score higher on such traits as extraversion, self-esteem, self-liking, high expectations, and assertiveness. These traits are purported to often lead to narcissism and entitlement.

Two-thirds of students predict they will perform in the top 20% of the population in their adult jobs. Self-esteem cannot deliver their expected success, and this mathematical impossibility leads many to experience frustration. They are showing measures of stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression and are receiving lower scores on self-reliance.

Millennials want a clearly structured academic path. They look for special treatment and ask specifically what knowledge is required for exams. College professors sense their students wanting to be entertained by the instructor. These instructors also experience Millennials challenging them on grades and the relevance of assignments.

QUID PRO QUO

This generation has a transactional relationship to education, seeing higher education as a necessary and expensive consumer good. This commodity mind-set translates tuition into a college degree. The average millennial student expects professors to be accessible and approachable and to connect lessons to real life.

WHERE THEY ARE GOING

Millennials are sizing up to be the most educated generation in history. Bachelor degrees conferred were predominantly in business, the social sciences and history, health sciences, and education.

After commencement, 29% of top college graduates intend to seek employment in the private sector, while 17% have set their sights on the nonprofit field or teaching. Only 2% of respondents plan to work in the federal government after leaving school. Some 27% are looking at graduate school, and the rest are looking at the military and other options.

OBJECTIVE

A study shows that the biggest objective for young adults today, both male and female, is happiness. This is an important shift: It appears men and women are moving away from what used to be the be-all and end-all—money and power—in favor of love and friendship. It will be noteworthy to see how this evolution affects this and future generations.

(Sections taken from The Millennial Generation Research Review via the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation)

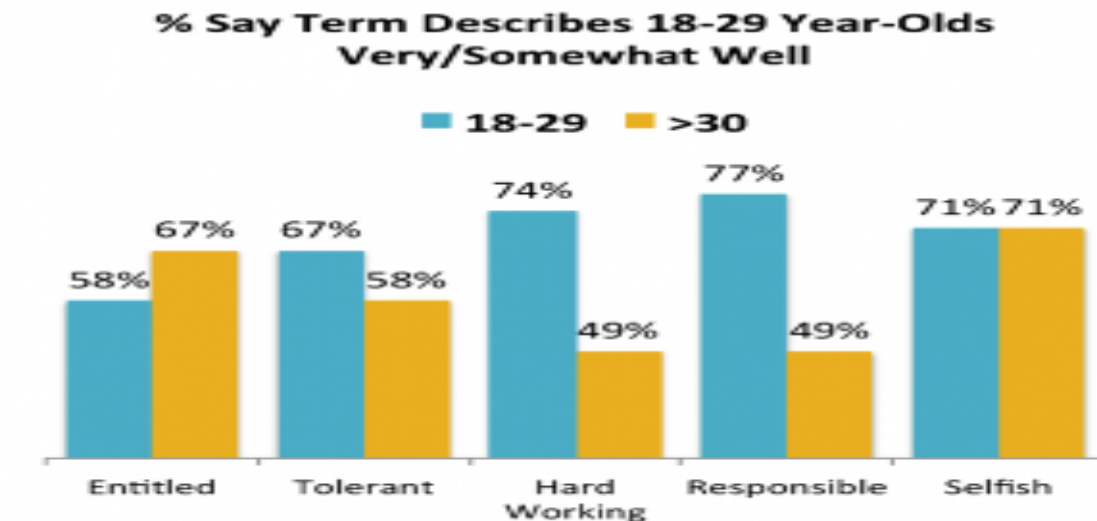
Majorities Say Millennials Are Selfish and Entitled, But Also Tolerant, Hard Working, and Responsible

Now I'm going to read a few words that people sometimes use to describe young Americans between 18 and 29 years old. Please tell me how well you think each word describes young people.

	Selfish	Entitled	Tolerant	Hard-Working	Responsible
NET Well	71%	65%	60%	55%	55%
NET Not Well	27%	30%	38%	43%	43%
Very well	35%	28%	22%	16%	10%
Somewhat well	36%	37%	38%	39%	45%
Not too well	16%	17%	24%	29%	28%
Not well at all	10%	13%	14%	14%	14%
Don't know/Refused	2%	5%	2%	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
REASON-RUPE POLL AUG 6-10 2014					

18-29 Year-Olds Much More Likely to View Their Cohort as "Responsible" and "Hard-Working" Compared to Americans Over 30

Now I'm going to read a few words that people sometimes use to describe young Americans between 18 and 29 years old. Please tell me how well you think each word describes young people.



REASON-RUPE POLL AUG 6-10 2014

As it has been pointed out countless times in the media and through anecdotes, millennials in the workplace feel entitled to undeserved promotions and raises, are addicted to their smartphones and **job hop** every few years. The litany of complaints goes on, but of course no generation is as bad -- or as good -- as reported: Generation X was more than just a bunch of slackers and Baby Boomers' strengths shook off their juvenile delinquent label.

In the case of Generation Y, twenty-somethings bring new perspectives and habits to the workplace that add value to their employers, even though those strengths also carry inherent weaknesses.

Whether you're managing millennials or are a twenty-something yourself, here are the unique and creative talents Gen Y brings to the table, the lessons they still need to learn and the opportunities they have to establish themselves as the next generation of leaders.

The double-edged sword of natural collaboration. Immune to hierarchy or labels and raised in an era of social media and crowdsourcing, Generation Y is fiercely inclusive. Studies show that millennial managers are more likely to build culturally competent teams that ignore race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical abilities, among other characteristics. This diversity of perspectives can drive stronger decision-making and should be encouraged.

But millennials' need for interaction can also manifest in a need for constant performance assessments, with **80 percent** of this demographic wanting regular feedback from their managers. And for a generation used to receiving trophies win or lose, any negative criticism can be hard to take.

Millennials should take a page from the Baby Boomers and focus on getting the job done, regardless of whether there's praise for the work they did. In addition, twenty-something's need to rethink negative criticism. It can be hard to take, but it's offered with good intentions: to improve your work and the company's success.

The good and bad of being self-sufficient. While millennials are often knocked for boomeranging back home after college, they're actually highly self-sufficient. For example, when diagnosing IT problems at work, 61 percent of millennials said they don't immediately call company support. Instead, 71 percent have turned to Google for a solution at least once. And while some IT departments balk at the potential risk of this approach, it's often faster and more efficient.

But along with self-sufficiency comes a dangerous rigidity. Millennials can't Google their path to success. They need to look beyond established methods and understand that their value to employers is to continuously seek out new strategies, devise better processes and improve quality. They're being given the opportunity to thrive and differentiate, but they need to see it and capitalize on it.

The love-hate relationship with social media. Having grown up with Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, millennials have no qualms about sharing their lives as they happen. In doing so, they can build their own reputations as well as that of their employer. Plus, they may be more willing to invest in creative solutions in anything they tackle -- even in quitting their jobs (Remember the Marina Shifrin quitting video seen by more than 17 million people?) The best managers are able to tap that creativity and millennials' ability to command an audience. That said, incessant sharing of irrelevant or useless information is all the evidence most observers need to peg millennials as narcissists. To avoid this stereotype, Gen Y should err on the side of sharing useful, relevant information. Before sharing, ask yourself one key question: Does this post help someone? If yes, publish. If no, don't.

The balancing act of purpose. Millennials don't just want a job: They want to make a difference. An MTV study showed that 83 percent of millennials want to work for a company that values their creativity. More than 90 percent are motivated to work harder if they know where their work is going and 92 percent expect feedback. In this environment, managers have no excuse for withholding an explanation for even minor tasks. It's absolutely fair to want to know how the task matters, but millennials shouldn't wait around until the higher purpose is revealed. Sometimes a task is just a task. Certainly, millennials should let their managers know if they'd like their work's purpose better.

communicated, but in the meantime, they should complete the tasks at hand and do them well.

If you're a millennial, play to your strengths but recognize you still have a few things to learn about the workplace. Your success ultimately depends on your ability to rise above your perceived weaknesses. If you manage millennials, take a step back and recognize the value they can offer through new perspectives and approaches to their work.



Rape Culture in America

“As a culture, we still refuse collectively to accept that most rapes are committed by ordinary men, men who have friends and families, men who may even have done great or admirable things with their lives. We refuse to accept that nice guys rape, and they do it often. Part of the reason we haven’t accepted it is that it’s a painful thing to contemplate – far easier to keep on believing that only evil men rape, only violent, psychotic men lurking in alleyways with pantomime-villain mustaches and knives, than to consider that rape might be something that ordinary men do. Men who might be our friends or colleagues or people we look up to.” – Laurie Penny, *The Independent*

Rape culture is a term that was coined by feminists in the United States in

the 1970's. It was designed to show the ways in which society blamed victims of sexual assault and normalized male sexual violence.

Many feminists have provided great definitions of what rape culture is and how it plays out everyday. Emilie Buchwald, *author of Transforming a Rape Culture*, describes that when society normalizes sexualized violence, it accepts and creates rape culture. In her book she defines rape culture as: ***a complex set of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm . . . In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable . . . However . . . much of what we accept as inevitable is in fact the expression of values and attitudes that can change.***

The website Force: Upsetting the Rape Culture explains how rape culture is the images, language, laws and other everyday phenomena that we see and hear everyday that validate and perpetuate rape. ***Rape culture includes jokes, TV, music, advertising, legal jargon, laws, words and imagery, that make violence against women and sexual coercion seem so normal that people believe that rape is inevitable. Rather than viewing the culture of rape as a problem to change, people in a rape culture think about the persistence of rape as “just the way things are.”***

We need to notice this stuff, get outraged, and share our outrage with others. Staying aware of rape culture is painful work, but we can't interrupt the culture of violence unless we are willing to see it for what it is.

- Alana Prochuk, WAVAW's C.A.R.E. About Gendered Violence at Vancouver Community College Coordinator.
(WAVAW website, *What is Rape Culture*)

Rape Culture in music

Three 6 Mafia – *Let's Plan a Robbery* – “I had to rape this bitch cause the hoe was stacked, I fucked her from the back, with my gun to her back.”

Robin Thicke – *Blurred Lines* – “I hate these blurred lines, I know you want it, I know you want it, I know you want it.”

Grease (Movie) – *Summer Lovin'* - “GIRLS: Tell me more, tell me more. Was it love at first sight? GUYS: Tell me more, tell me more. Did she put up a fight?”

The Rolling Stones – *Brown Sugar* - Hear him whip the women just around midnight. Ah brown sugar how come you taste so good (a-ha) brown sugar, just like a young girl should.”

Jaime Foxx – *Blame It* – “She say she usually don't, but I know that she front. Cause shawty know what she want.”

Rick Ross – *U.O.E.N.O* - "Put Molly all in her champagne, she ain't even know it. I took her home and I enjoyed that, she ain't even know it"

Ben Harper – *Steal My Kisses* – "Cause I always have to steal my kisses from you. Always have to steal my kisses from you."

Johnny Mercer & Margaret Whitling (Made famous by) – *Baby It's Cold Outside* – "I really can't stay (But baby, it's cold outside) I've got to go away (But baby, it's cold outside) The neighbors might think (Baby, it's bad out there) Say what's in this drink? (No cabs to be had out there)"

Rape Culture in America: Two Opinions

Rape Culture is Real by Zerlina Maxwell, *Opinion Time*, March 2014

"You were drinking, what did you expect?"

Those were the first words that I heard when I went to someone I trusted for support after my roommate's boyfriend raped me eight years ago. When I came forward to report what happened, instead of support, many well-meaning people close to me asked me questions about what I was wearing, if I had done something to cause the assault, or if I had been drinking. These questions about my choices the night of my assault — as opposed to the choices made by my rapist — were in some ways as painful as the violent act itself. I had stumbled upon rape culture: a culture in which sexual violence is the norm and victims are blamed for their own assaults.

Last week, in an essay here at Time, Caroline Kitchens wrote that rape culture as a theory over-hyped by "hysterical" feminists. Emboldened by a disappointing and out of touch statement by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), Kitchens writes, "Recently, rape-culture theory has migrated from the lonely corners of the feminist blogosphere into the mainstream. In January, the White House asserted that we need to combat campus rape by '[changing] a culture of passivity and tolerance in this country, which too often allows this type of violence to persist...' Tolerance for rape? Rape is a horrific crime, and rapists are despised."

Kitchens goes on to downplay the problem of sexual violence saying, "Though rape is certainly a serious problem, there's no evidence that it's considered a cultural norm."

Is 1 in 5 American women surviving rape or attempted rape considered a cultural norm? Is 1 in 6 men being abused before the age of 18 a cultural norm? These statistics are not just shocking, they represent real people. Yet, these millions of survivors and allies don't raise their collective voices to educate America about our culture of rape because of fear. Rape culture is a real and serious, and we need to talk about it. Simply put, feminists want equality for everyone and that begins with physical safety.

"If so many millions of women were getting carjacked or kidnapped, we'd call it a public crisis. That we accept it as normal, even inevitable, is all the evidence I need," Jaclyn Friedman, author *Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape* told

me, in response to Kitchens' piece. "If we already despise rapists, why are they so rarely held accountable in any way?," Friedman asks. An analysis by RAINN found that 97% of rapists never spend a single day in jail for their crimes. "What we really despise is the *idea* of rapists: a terrifying monster lurking in the bushes, waiting to pounce on an innocent girl as she walks by," Friedman says. "But actual rapists, men who are usually known to (and often loved by) their victims? Men who are sometimes our sports heroes, political leaders, buddies, boyfriends and fathers? Evidence suggests we don't despise them nearly as much as we should."

In response to Kitchens' piece, I started the hashtag #RapeCultureIsWhen on Twitter hoping that it would spark a public dialogue about rape culture and shift the conversation away from the myths that shame so many survivors into silence. This conversation is meant to be a tool to educate people about what rape culture is, how to spot it, and how to combat it. The hashtag immediately took off and trended nationally for hours on the strength of personal stories and advocates sharing information about victim blaming, bystander intervention, and healthy masculinity. The level of engagement is an illustration of how many people wanted to speak out about this issue many are too afraid to touch. The following statements are made up of contributions the #RapeCultureIsWhen hashtag as well as the myriad personal stories of survivors with the courage to speak out:

- Rape culture is when women who come forward are questioned about what they were wearing.
- Rape culture is when survivors who come forward are asked, "Were you drinking?"
- Rape culture is when people say, "she was asking for it."
- Rape culture is when we teach women how to not get raped, instead of teaching men not to rape.
- Rape culture is when the lyrics of Robin Thicke's 'Blurred Lines' mirror the words of actual rapists and is still the number one song in the country.
- Rape culture is when the mainstream media mourns the end of the convicted Steubenville rapists' football careers and does not mention the young girl who was victimized.
- Rape culture is when cyberbullies take pictures of sexual assaults and harass their victims online after the fact, which in the cases of Audrie Pott and Rehtaeh Parsons tragically ended in their suicides.
- Rape culture is when, in 31 states, rapists can legally sue for child custody if the rape results in pregnancy.
- Rape culture is when college campus advisers tasked with supporting the student body, shame survivors who report their rapes. (Annie Clark, a campus activist, says an administrator at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill told her when she reported her rape, "Well... Rape is like football, if you look back on the game, and you're the quarterback, Annie... is there anything you would have done differently?")
- Rape culture is when colleges are more concerned with getting sued by assailants than in supporting survivors. (Or at Occidental College, where students and administrators who advocated for survivors were terrorized for speaking out

against the school's insufficient reporting procedures.)

It's no surprise that we would refuse to acknowledge that rape and sexual violence is the norm, not the exception. It's no surprise because most of us would rather believe that the terrible realities we hear about aren't real or that, at least, we can't do anything about it. The truth is ugly. But by denying the obvious we continue to allow rapists to go unpunished and leave survivors silenced.

(Maxwell is political analyst, speaker, and writer for EBONY.com. Her writing is focused on culture issues and policy concerning politics, victim blaming, sexual assault, and gender inequality.)

The Rape 'Epidemic' Doesn't Actually Exist by Caroline Kitchens, Oct 24, 2013.

Caleb Warner: The former University of North Dakota student's college career was cut short after being falsely accused of sexual assault about two years ago. The 25-year-old man now lives in Fargo, N.D., and works as a delivery driver. Despite being cleared of all charges and having his accuser charged with making a false report, Warner says he has moved on and doesn't plan to resume his studies at UND or any university. "It's not where I thought I'd be," he says.

A group of 100 protesters – including many topless women – recently marched the streets of Athens, Ohio chanting, "Blame the system, not the victim" and "Two, four, six, eight, stop the violence, stop the rape." Organized by an Ohio University student organization called "f*ckrapeculture," the protest was designed to bring attention to what the founders believe is a toxic culture of sexism and sexual violence infecting their campus. f*ckrapeculture cofounder Claire Chadwick explained to the campus newspaper, "The name of our organization and the statements that we've made are loud. But it's because we need to be heard." But saying something loudly does not make it true or just.

Chadwick and the members of f*ckrapeculture aren't the only student sexual violence activists that are demanding attention. Since last spring, an expansive network of student activists has emerged to fight "rape culture" and change the way universities respond to cases of sexual misconduct. However, as universities reexamine their sexual assault policies, administrators should be wary of the demands of these "rape culture" activists. Not only is their movement built on a foundation of dubious statistics and a distorted view of masculinity, but it has already led to policies that have proved devastating to those who have been falsely accused.

Activists claim that reform is urgent because one in five women will be raped during her time at college. I have yet to see an article lamenting the campus rape culture that does not contain some iteration of this alarming statistic. But is it accurate? Statistics surrounding sexual assault are notoriously unreliable and inconsistent, primarily because of vague and expansive definitions of what qualifies as sexual assault. Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute explains that the study often cited as the origin of the "one in five" factoid is an online survey conducted under a grant from the Justice Department. Surveyors employed such a broad definition

that "forced kissing" and even "attempted forced kissing" qualified as sexual assault.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' "Violent Victimization of College Students" report tells a different and more plausible story about campus culture. During the years surveyed, 1995-2002, the DOJ found that there were six rapes or sexual assaults per thousand per year. Across the nation's four million female college students, that comes to about one victim in forty students. Other DOJ statistics show that the overall rape rate is in sharp decline: since 1995, the estimated rate of female rape or sexual assault victimizations has decreased by about 60 percent.

Of course, there are still far too many college women who are victims of sexual assault. But there's little evidence to support the claim that campus rape is an "epidemic," as Yale student activist Alexandra Brodsky recently wrote in the Guardian.

Bolstered by inflated statistics and alarmist depictions of campus culture, advocates have been successful in initiating policy changes designed to better protect victims of sexual violence. Duke, Swarthmore, Amherst, Emerson and the University of North Carolina are among the many institutions that have recently reviewed and revised their policies. It is not clear that these policies have made campuses safer places for women, but they have certainly made them treacherous places for falsely accused men.

In January 2010, University of North Dakota student Caleb Warner was accused of sexually assaulting a fellow student. A UND tribunal determined that Warner was guilty of misconduct, and he was swiftly suspended from school and banned from setting foot on campus for three years. Yet the police – presented with the same evidence – were so unconvinced of Warner's guilt that they refused to bring criminal charges against him. Instead, they charged his accuser with filing a false report and issued a warrant for her arrest. Warner's accuser fled town and failed to appear to answer the charges.

Despite these developments, the university repeatedly rejected Warner's requests for a rehearing. Finally, a year and a half later, UND reexamined Warner's case and determined that their finding of guilt was "not substantiated" – but only after the civil liberties group FIRE intervened and launched a national campaign on Warner's behalf.

Unfortunately, Warner is not alone in his grievances. Across the country, students accused of sexual assault are regularly tried before inadequate and unjust campus judiciaries. At most schools, cases of sexual misconduct are decided by a committee of as few as three students, faculty members or administrators. At Swarthmore College, volunteers are now being solicited via email to serve on the Sexual Assault and Harassment Hearing Panel. Such a panel is far more likely to yield gender violence activists than impartial fact finders. In a court of law, we rely on procedural safeguards to ensure unbiased jury selection and due process. But on the college campus, these safeguards have vanished.

What's more, campus judiciaries operate under a dangerously low standard of proof for sexual assault cases, thanks to federal mandates. Since April 2011, the Department of Education has required institutions to consider cases of sexual misconduct under a "preponderance of evidence" standard (rather than a higher "clear and convincing" standard, which was commonly used prior to the new guidelines). This means that if a majority of committee members believe it is just slightly more likely than not that a sexual assault occurred, they must side with the accuser.

Sexual assault is a horrific offense, and institutions must do all they can to protect victims. It is admirable that activists like Chadwick are trying to fight it. However, a false accusation of rape can also have devastating, life-altering consequences. Universities have an obligation to protect the rights of all students – both victims of sexual assault and the accused. They must stop responding to questionable statistics and abstract claims about a rape culture and instead focus on ensuring basic fairness for all students.

Meanwhile, advocates for due process, rules of evidence, basic justice and true gender equality need to speak louder than the "f*ckrapeculture" alarmists.

(Caroline Kitchens is a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute, a private, conservative polling and research organization)

Guilty Until Proven Innocent by Cathy Young, *Reason.com*, Jan 2014

The federal war on campus rape is unfolding amid a revival of what Katie Roiphe, in her landmark 1994 book *The Morning After: Sex, Fear and Feminism on Campus*, dubbed "rape-crisis feminism"-a loosely defined ideology that views sexual violence as the cornerstone of male oppression of women, expands the definition of rape to include a wide range of sexual acts involving no physical force or threat, and elevates the truth of women's claims of sexual victimization to nearly untouchable status. This brand of feminism seemed in retreat a few years ago, particularly after a hoax at Duke University drew attention to the danger of presuming guilt. (In 2007, the alleged rape of a stripper by three Duke lacrosse players sparked local and national outrage-until the case was dismissed and the young men declared innocent.) Yet in 2013, the concept made a strong comeback with a sexual assault case that gained national visibility in January and went to trial in March. This one was in Steubenville, Ohio.

The facts in Steubenville were ugly enough. A 16-year-old girl who got very drunk at an end-of-the-summer high school party was repeatedly sexually assaulted while unconscious or barely conscious. One boy, 17-year-old Trent Mays, penetrated her with his fingers, tried to get her to perform oral sex, and essentially used her as a masturbation aid; another, Ma'lik Richmond, briefly participated in the abuse. Three other teenagers witnessed at least some of these acts (which took place in a car and in the basement of a home after the girl left the party with the boys), taking photos and a video. The next day, Mays bragged about his exploits and mocked the girl in text messages to friends, to whom he also sent her nude photo. When Mays and Richmond, both star players on the Steubenville High School football team, were arrested and charged with rape a few days later, many residents in the football-worshiping small town sympathized with the boys and were inclined to assume that the girl-an out-of-town private school student-was lying to cover up her misbehavior.

This sordid saga arguably shone a spotlight on the dark underside of small-town "football culture," which can breed a sense of entitlement and impunity in popular athletes. Yet the national press coverage, fueled by wild rumors of unspeakable brutalities (the girl was said to have been drugged, kidnapped, urinated on, and gang-raped for hours) and of

an official cover-up, turned into a far more sweeping indictment of America's "rape culture"-a term that suddenly migrated from the fringes of feminist rhetoric into mainstream discourse.

Like many radical theories, the idea of rape culture contains plausible elements of truth: Some traditional gender arrangements have indeed encouraged cavalier or even tacitly accepting attitudes toward certain kinds of sexual violence. For much of history women have been treated to varying degrees as men's sexual property, with rape condoned if not legitimized in some circumstances: for example, in marriage (including forced marriage), or toward women who transgressed norms of feminine propriety. Even in the United States, as recently as 40 years ago, juries could be instructed to consider "unchaste character"-such as being single and on birth control-as a strike against an accuser's credibility, and courts often treated submission to overt physical intimidation as consent (at least in acquaintance-rape situations). And there is some basis for the argument that the conventional script of male pursuit and feminine coyness-with "no" routinely taken to mean "try harder"-can sometimes blur the lines between consent and coercion.

But this history is only one part of a complex mix of cultural attitudes-a mix that has long included genuine societal abhorrence of rape as a violation of female personhood. It is a measure of this abhorrence that when feminists in the 1970s challenged the unjust treatment of rape victims, the reforms they advocated-such as dropping resistance requirements that did not apply to other violent crimes, or barring the use of a woman's sexual history to discredit her-were soon enacted with overwhelming support. Moreover, the social response to sex offenses has been complicated by many factors besides sexism, from a general human tendency to sweep sordid matters under the rug to the difficulty of proving crimes that occur in intimate settings; these factors have affected male victims, too. Feminist theory offers no convincing explanation for why a homophobic patriarchy would also fail to protect boys from adult male sexual predators.

And yet the "rape culture" trope has gained such sway that even a *New Yorker* writer highly critical of activist zealotry over Steubenville offered a disclaimer to defend the term. In an article in the magazine's August issue, Ariel Levy cited a 2011 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report stating that one in five American women are victims of rape or attempted rape and a recent Pentagon survey finding that one in four active-duty service members have been sexually assaulted. The problem, she concluded, could not be so pervasive unless there was a rape-enabling culture treating sex as "something men get-and take" from women.

Rape on Stage: How Theaters Portray Sexual Assault by Rebecca Ritzel, *TBD*, Sept 30, 2011

If the opening shows of D.C.'s theater season are any indication, more actresses should consider carrying mace.

Or rather, their characters should. In the first round of openings alone, rape—or

the suggestion of it—factors into five mainstage shows, and several more plots hinge on what could be termed sexually violent situations. In each show, the actual act is handled differently, from the stylized brutality onstage in Synetic Theater’s *Macbeth* to the swirling rumors of an offstage sexual assault in *Parade* at Ford’s Theatre.

In every case, rape is used to convey the rock-bottom baseness of human nature. “As far as a female character goes, this is the worst thing that could happen,” says Matt Gardiner, director of *The Hollow* at Signature Theatre. “It’s so intimate. And yet it is frequently used.”

Earlier this year, Arena Stage drew praise for its production of Lynn Nottage’s *Ruined*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning play about violence women face in the war-torn Congo. But sexual assault is not reserved for serious straight plays. Gardiner points out that Anita is gang-raped in *West Side Story*, and Aldonza is assaulted in *Man of La Mancha*. What’s interesting is that shows involving rape now running in D.C. are mostly musicals, and mostly new. *Fela!* is launching its national tour at Shakespeare Theater; *The Hollow* is a world premiere; and *Cry for Peace*, another play about violence in the Congo, is a work-in-process that got a staged reading at Georgetown University.

In every case, directors took great care to convey what happens to their characters using means they feel are dramatically effective, yet not so graphic as to send sensitive viewers running to the doors.

“It’s challenging,” Gardiner says. “You want the audience to feel uncomfortable — but not so uncomfortable that it takes you out of the play completely. It’s a delicate balance.”

In *Cry for Peace*, there’s already been so much violence by the time a female character describes being raped, the audience is not surprised. Director Ping Chong, who developed the show at Syracuse Stage, cast members of New York’s Congolese community in every role.

“I believe in letting the people these horrible things happened to speak,” Chong says. “That’s the power of documentary theater.”

Fela! also uses the testimonial approach, but testimonies are slightly fictionalized, and the impact is much more visceral. The violence occurs in Act 2, and up to that point, the musical has been mostly an Afrobeat song-and-dance extravaganza. But in 1977, Nigerian troops invaded the musician’s compound, violently attacking many of the singers’ 27 wives. In the musical, Fela has fewer leonine women stroking his ego, but after the raid scene — depicted with flashes of lighting, music and movement — each actress has a silent moment in a blinding spotlight. Above the stage, a corresponding mugshot-like image of each woman appears on a screen. The actresses are made up as if badly beaten, and to the left of each image, text written in first person describes what happened to them, going into great detail that includes genital mutilation.

These are *Fela!*’s only silent moments, a chilling space of stillness in an otherwise frenetic show.

Rape Culture in College

Excerpts from *The Michigan Daily* Article on Rape in Universities by Allana Akhtar, July, 2014

According to a recent analysis done by the Washington Post on data from the U.S. Department of Education, the University of Michigan had 34 total reported instances of sexual assault last year — the second highest number in the nation.

The University had 64 total recorded instances of sexual assault on campus from 2010 – 2012. There were 0.78 reported offenses per 1,000 students in 2012.

Of the nearly 1,570 colleges and universities listed, Pennsylvania State University had the highest number of reported sexual assaults with 56 in 2012. Harvard ranked third, behind the University, with 31.

In contrast, 45 percent of universities with enrollment of 1,000 or higher had 0 reported instances of sexual assault last year.

In January 2014, the White House Council on Women and Girls published a sexual assault report entitled “Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action” that stated nearly 1 in 5 women have been sexually assaulted while in college and 7 percent of college men admitted to committing rape or attempting rape. The data reveals that only 12 percent of student survivors report the assault to law enforcement.

In light of the White House report, the Obama administration created a task force to combat campus sexual assault as well as nation-wide sexual violence.

“To make our campuses safer, change still needs to come from many quarters: schools must adopt better policies and practices to prevent these crimes and to more effectively respond when they happen,” the report stated. “And federal agencies must ensure that schools are living up to their obligations.”

Federal law agencies took action again last May when the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights opened an investigation on over 60 universities for possible violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which prohibits gender-based discrimination in federally funded programs and organizations.

Among these schools is Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania. Penn State, like Michigan, received nation-wide scrutiny on its administration’s response to sexual assault following allegations of sexual abuse by former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky.

Although Penn State had the highest number of reported instances of sexual assault from 2010 to 2012, it also had the greatest rise of reported allegations in that time frame,

from 4 reported assaults in 2010 to 56 in 2012.

Penn State has recently implemented several programs to aid students, faculty and staff in responding to and preventing sexual misconduct. These include self-defense courses, mass educational initiatives, open campus discussions and changes to police protocol.

Lisa Powers, director of the Office of Strategic Communications at Penn State, said the university takes the issue of sexual violence on campus very seriously and encourages open, national discussion on the issue. She added that she believes high rates of reported assault reflect survivor comfort with coming forward.

“We certainly believe training is effective, and we know that if more people are aware they are generally more likely to come forward and report,” she said. “That’s a good thing, since we know this is a crime that is vastly under-reported.”

Lisa Lapin, associate vice president of University Communications at Stanford University, which had the fifth highest number of reported sexual offenses in 2012, echoed similar attitudes toward reported assault.

“We consider the numbers actually a success, because underreporting is a chronic problem in all colleges and universities,” she said. “We look at the increase in our numbers to mean that our outreach programs are working and we’re helping people get access to the resources that they need.”

On the other end of the spectrum, Johns Hopkins University, which only had 6 total reported instances of sexual assault from 2010 to 2012, started taking steps to improve their sexual misconduct policy following the Department of Education’s mandate clarifying university’s active role in investigating allegations of sexual assault under Title IX, though the school isn’t currently under investigation.

Dennis O’Shea, executive director of Media Relations and Crisis Communications at Johns Hopkins University, said the university revised their sexual violence policy in December 2012. It has created a 24/7 crisis hotline for survivors of sexual assault to feel comfortable reporting attacks and hired a sexual violence prevention, education and response coordinator. They are working to reword their policy to make it more understandable to students.

Though O’Shea did not wish to comment on the low number of reported assaults, he said the school is in the process of forming a Sexual Violence Advisory Committee with students, faculty and staff to help the school address prevention and response.

“We’re in no way complacent,” he said. “There is more to do and we are determined to do it. We will live up to the standards we have set for ourselves.”

Though university spokespeople and federal researchers believe greater numbers of reported instances of assault is an improvement, it is still only part of the problem in combating occurring sexual assault across campuses.

Guilty until proven innocent By Coy Ozias, *The Daily Princetonian*, Dec 2014

Christian conservatives on the far right from the late Baptist minister Jerry Falwell to Sarah Palin, former Governor of Alaska, have been working to curtail sex on college

campuses since the 1960s, with few results. But the liberal, feminist campaign against sexual assault has had more of the staunching effect on college students' sexual behavior.

For decades, the Christian right has preached biblical admonitions condemning premarital sex. Purity rings, exhortations about STDs and a push for abstinence have long been conservatives' siren calls to hormone-laden college students. It does not appear that this group has been influenced by conservatives' message.

The Obama administration, along with women's rights organizations and anti-patriarchal groups, have been a vocal force against campus sexual assaults. These groups say that 20 percent of female college students have been sexually assaulted. They demand that colleges take measures to end these attacks. The Obama administration has ordered colleges to beef up their policies for punishing sexual misconduct or risk losing federal funding. Under Title IX, colleges have been compelled by the Obama administration to adopt adjudication processes that are meant to replace the criminal justice system. Under this new process, schools are required to use a "preponderance of evidence" standard to determine the alleged guilt of an offender in cases of sexual assault. This standard of proof is much easier to reach than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard, the highest standard of proof and the one used in criminal cases. The University resisted to lower its own standard from "clear and persuasive" until last month, after it was charged with violating Title IX and agreed to accept the preponderance of evidence standard. Andrew Miltenberg, a lawyer for several male students who have been accused of sexual assault, stated that "schools [are] treating young men as presumptively guilty, while bowing to pressure from the national dialogue." Under these new University rules, men are guilty until proven innocent.

Sexual assault and rape are wrong. Perpetrators should be punished. But the adjudication process should be fair for the accused as well as the victims.

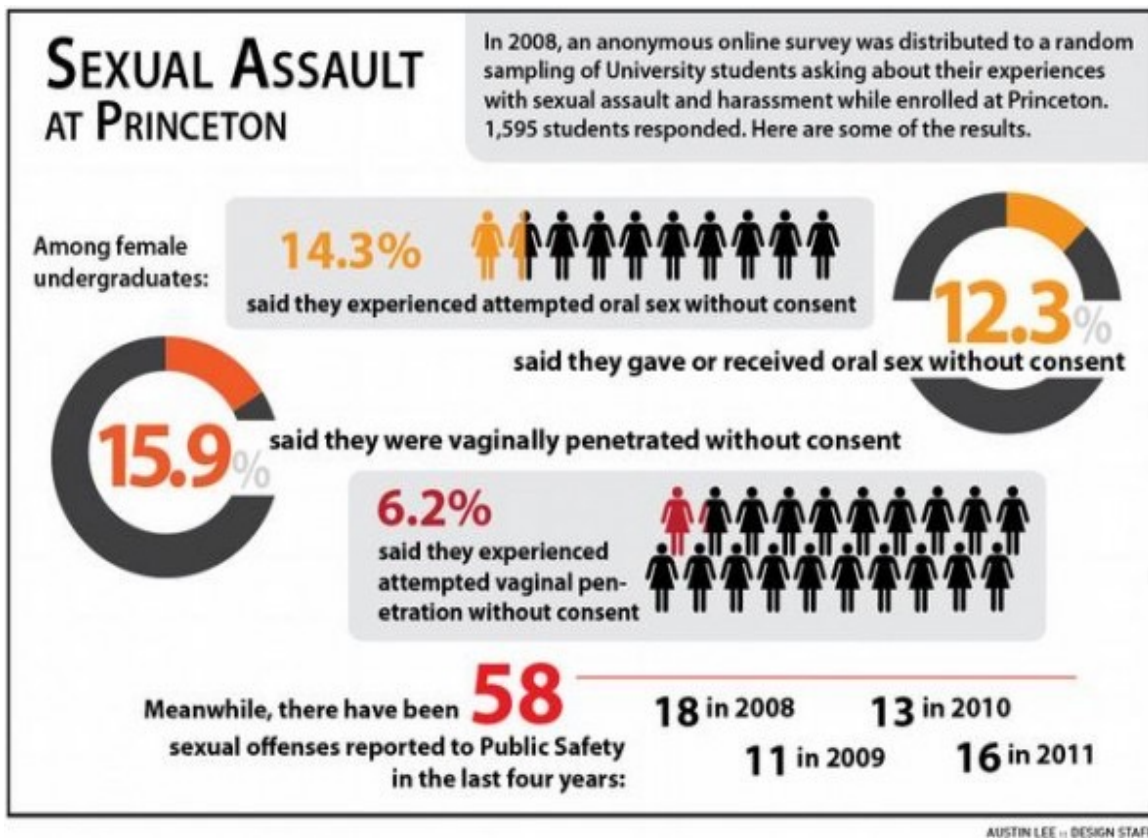
What is happening now is that many male students who thumbed their noses at the Christian right's warnings of sin, disease, pregnancy and eternal damnation are now unsure and cowed about sexual contact with females because of these new University policies backed by the federal government. Normal, consensual, heterosexual sex on campus has become dangerous for males. The rule used to be "no means no." That has changed. The new rule is "yes means yes." The burden of "affirmative consent" has been placed solely on the male. A male must get consent from the female at every stage of their sexual encounter. However, even if he does get consent, he is still at risk if it is determined that the female was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Even if he himself is intoxicated, it is now his responsibility to assess the intoxication of his partner. The female has none of this responsibility. If a female says that she was raped or assaulted the next day, the male student can face expulsion, even if the sex was consensual and not forced.

At Occidental College – according to the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, a legal advocacy group representing a male student accused of sexual assault – a female student texted a male friend and asked him if he wanted to hook up. Both of them had been drinking. She next texted her female friends and told them she had the intention of having sex with him. Then, she texted the man and asked him if he had condoms. She met him. She willingly had sex. The next day, she accused him of rape. The male student was expelled from Occidental College. He was charged with violating Occidental's

“written incapacitation standard,” which says a female cannot make an informed and rational decision to engage in sexual activity if “she lacks conscious knowledge of the nature of the act or is physically helpless.” The police investigation determined that “[w]itnesses were interviewed and agreed that the victim and suspect were both drunk[.] [H]owever, ... they were both willing participants exercising bad judgment[.] ... It would be reasonable for [the male student] to conclude based on their communications and [the accuser’s] actions that, even though she was intoxicated, she could still exercise reasonable judgment.” This decision ended police involvement in the case. However, Occidental undertook its own investigation and found the male student “responsible” under the preponderance of evidence standard (a mere 50.01% certainty). FIRE Senior Vice President Robert Shibley said, “By classifying sex while drunk as rape and stripping students of due process protections, Occidental and the federal government have rendered vast numbers of students unwitting rapists — and ensured that being accused is nearly the same thing as being found guilty.”

These cases have had a chilling effect on campus sexual behavior. Colleges need to take the protection of females on campus seriously. Colleges need to squash any form of rape culture. But males need to protect themselves as well. Will males begin to ask for written consent from potential female partners? Will they videotape this consent with a time stamp? Will male students ask females to take a breathalyzer test to ensure they are not incapacitated before having sex?

Jerry Falwell abhorred the sexual revolution of the 1960s. As he looks down from the Big House in the sky at current University sexual policies of 2014, he is probably smiling.



Nonconsensual Sex: How Colleges Rebranded Rape by Claire Gordon, *Aljazeera America*, April 2014

Around 15 years ago, Brett Sokolow was touring universities and advising them on how to deal with sexual assault on their campuses. On these visits, he noticed something strange. The schools had policies about rape, and recognized that rape happened. But when it came down to it, they just didn't want to believe their own students actually raped.

"I trained hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of hearing boards, and [listened] to them get squeamish about it," Sokolow said. "The hearing board would say, 'We're not willing to label this guy a rapist.'"

Sokolow, the CEO of the consulting and law firm the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, decided colleges needed another word. But on the issue of sexual violence, almost every word is loaded.

"We tried out 'sexual abuse' for a few years," Sokolow explained. "Then the priest scandals in the Catholic Church captured the meaning of that." So he came up with something new. It was a word that meant rape but without rape's stigma. Focus groups loved it. Universities were comfortable with it. In the past five years, the term has exploded. Between 700 and 800 campuses have adopted this language in their policies, Sokolow estimates.

“Nonconsensual sex” was born, and in the world of higher education it has essentially become an industry standard.

Nonconsensual sex is sexual assault. Several schools make that clear. In Princeton University’s policy, for example, next to the category “non-consensual sexual penetration,” it states in parentheses that the act is “commonly referred to as rape.” And next to “non-consensual sexual contact,” the act is “commonly referred to as sexual assault.”

But the reason that hearing boards winced at the word “rape” is the exact reason activists think the term is important: It’s violent and powerful, and does justice to the violation that victims experience. Anti-rape campaigners have pressed their communities to understand what rape is, and how much it happens. Many see “nonconsensual sex” as a harmful euphemism.

“It really waters down the act that’s being committed,” said Tracey Vitchers, the spokeswoman for Students Active for Ending Rape, or SAFER. “It should not be called nonconsensual sex. Rape is rape. It’s a crime. It’s a felony.”

But that’s one of the reasons Sokolow, who defends schools in lawsuits, doesn’t think campus policies should use the word “rape.”

“It’s very off the cuff to say ‘rape is rape,’” Sokolow said. “If women walk around campus saying they’ve been raped, they could be sued for defamation.”

Rape is a serious crime. And colleges aren’t in the business of determining what is a crime. They can’t send a rapist to prison. They can only decide if a student violated school rules, and the worst they can do is kick the kid off campus. In making that decision, most colleges use a much lower burden of proof than a criminal court — “**preponderance of evidence**,” or “more likely than not,” as opposed to “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

If they start treading into legal language, Sokolow warns, schools open themselves up to trouble. A student expelled for “nonconsensual sex” is far less likely to lawyer up and hit back.

It’s rare for a college to seriously sanction a student who commits sexual assault. According to a 2010 investigation by the Center for Public Integrity, only 10 to 25 percent of students found “responsible” for sexual assault were permanently kicked off campus.

Sokolow believed “nonconsensual sex” sounded less bad, which could actually encourage schools to punish rapists. But some experts think toning down the language has the opposite effect.

“It just gives the school the ability to not expel students,” said Colby Bruno, who has assisted thousands of colleges and universities in addressing sexual assault as the senior legal counsel at the Victim Rights Law Center. “That’s really what it’s about.”

In the first half of 2013, Yale University reported four cases in which the school found “sufficient evidence” that students had engaged in “nonconsensual sex,” and all of the perpetrators were allowed to continue pursuing degrees. (Only one was suspended.) When this information came out in Yale’s biannual report on sexual misconduct last summer, the backlash was swift and loud. The headlines read: “Yale Fails to Expel Students Guilty of Sexual Assault.” A Change.org petition collected 1,500 signatures.

In response, Yale did something unprecedented in the world of college sexual assault policy: The school published detailed descriptions of different nonconsensual sex scenarios and their corresponding punishments. The school wanted to make it clear that it wasn't letting rapists roam freely on campus.

Nonconsensual sex was not, in fact, sexual assault. According to Yale Deputy Provost Stephanie Spangler, the phrase allowed the school to punish behavior that may not meet the legal standard.

One of the scenarios describes a couple, Harper and Sidney. Harper knows Sidney isn't ready to have sex, but starts moving toward it.

"We shouldn't do this," Sidney says, continuing to touch Harper intimately.

"This is a bad idea," Sidney says, as Harper proceeds anyway. Sidney starts to cry, still embracing Harper.

The punishment: probation to suspension.

"If that's not rape, I don't know what is," Bruno said. "I don't know how people think that's not rape. That's called victim blaming ... You can't say, 'She said no slightly, you pulled away slightly.' When you're in that situation and someone pulls away, you know what's happening."

Activists have long cringed over terms for "different types" of rape. In the late 2000s there was "gray rape," the not-exactly rape-rape, in which mixed messages and alcohol muddled the very idea of consent. Before that, there was "date rape" — a phrase first used by activists, trying to shatter the myth that most rape was committed by strangers. But then that phrase began to grate on advocates too.

"Do you call it date murder?" said Bruno. "No, you call it murder."

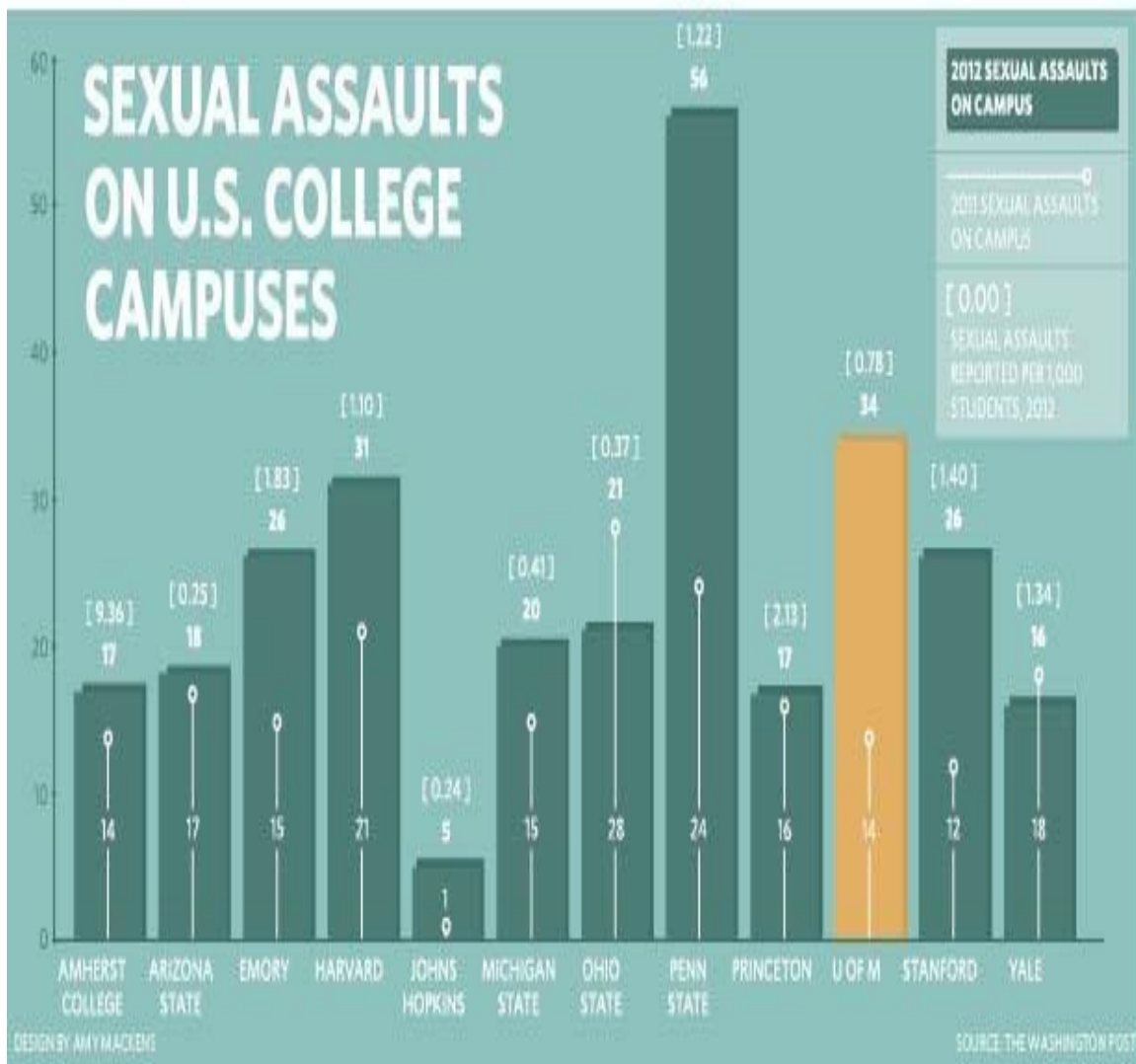
For a long time, activists have fought to get these "types" of rape acknowledged as real rape — to get students, the law, the police and everyone else to recognize that rape isn't just a stranger in an alley, and being raped doesn't mean you always have bruises and broken bones.

In this spirit, college activists have pushed for so-called affirmative consent sexual assault policies, which have become the new normal on campuses in the last couple of years. The policies state clearly that consent must be "unambiguous" and "consist of mutually agreed upon words or actions" "from beginning to end." They clarify that consent isn't just the absence of a "a verbal 'no'" or "physical resistance," that consent can't be conveyed through silence or "passivity," and that if anyone seems "hesitant, confused or uncertain," the parties need to stop and get a clear "yes."

"Communicating verbally before engaging in sexual activity is imperative" even if it seems "painfully awkward," explains Northwestern University.

"A verbal 'no' even if it may sound indecisive or insincere should be treated as a withdrawal of consent," points out Oberlin College.

And as Rice University clarifies: Consent shouldn't be assumed just because "you bought this person dinner/drinks" and "she/he seemed really 'into it.'"



Recent Cases

I. Case: Tawana Brawley

Tawana Glenda Brawley: (born 1972) is an African-American woman from Wappingers Falls, New York, who gained notoriety in 1987–88 for falsely accusing six white men of having raped her. On November 28, 1987, Tawana Brawley, who had been missing for four days was found seemingly unconscious and unresponsive, lying in a garbage bag several feet from an apartment where she had once lived. Her clothing was torn and burned, her body smeared with feces. She was taken to the emergency room, where the words "KKK", "ni***r", and "bitch" were discovered written on her torso with a black substance described as charcoal. She indicated she had been raped repeatedly in a wooded area by three white men, at least one of whom, she claimed, was a police officer. A sexual assault kit was administered, and police began building a case. Brawley provided no names or descriptions of her assailants. She later told others that there had been no rape, only other kinds of sexual abuse. Forensic tests found no evidence that a sexual assault of any kind had occurred.

Actor Bill Cosby, among others, pledged support and helped raise money for a legal fund. In December 1987, 1,000 people, including Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, marched through the streets of Newburgh, New York, in support of Brawley.

The mainstream media's coverage drew heated criticism from the African-American press and leaders for its treatment of the teenager. They cited the leaking and publication of photos taken of her at the hospital and the revelation of her name despite her being underage.

On October 6, 1988, the grand jury released its 170-page report concluding Brawley had not been abducted, assaulted, raped and sodomized, as had been claimed by Brawley and her advisers. In the decision, the grand jury noted many problems with Brawley's story. Among these were that the rape kit results did not indicate sexual assault. Additionally, despite her claim of having been held captive outdoors for days, Brawley was not suffering from hypothermia, was well-nourished, and appeared to have brushed her teeth recently. Much of the grand jury evidence pointed to a possible motive for Brawley's falsifying the incident: trying to avoid violent punishment from her mother and her stepfather, Ralph King. Witnesses testified that Glenda Brawley had previously beaten her daughter for running away and for spending nights with boys. The case exposed deep mistrust in the black community about winning justice from legal institutions.

II. Case: Duke Lacrosse

The Duke lacrosse case was a 2006 criminal case resulting from what proved to be a [false accusation of rape](#) made against three members of the men's lacrosse team at [Duke University](#) in [Durham, North Carolina, United States](#). The fallout from the case's

resolution led to public discussion of [reverse racism](#), among other things, and the resignation and [disbarment](#) of lead prosecutor [Michael Nifong](#).

In March 2006, [Crystal Gail Mangum](#), an African-American student at [North Carolina Central University](#) who worked as a stripper, dancer and escort, [falsely accused](#) three [white](#) students, members of the [Duke Blue Devils men's lacrosse](#) team, of [raping](#) her at a party held at the house of two of the [team's captains](#) in [Durham, North Carolina](#), on March 13, 2006. Many people involved in, or commenting on the case, including prosecutor Michael "Mike" Nifong, either called the alleged assault a [hate crime](#) or suggested it might be one.

In response to the allegations Duke University suspended the lacrosse team for two games on March 28, 2006. On April 5, 2006, Duke lacrosse coach [Mike Pressler](#) was forced to resign under threat by athletic director [Joe Alleva](#) and Duke [President Richard Brodhead](#) canceled the remainder of the 2006 season. On April 11, 2007, [North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper](#) dropped all charges and declared the three players innocent. Cooper stated that the charged players – Reade Seligmann, Collin Finnerty, and David Evans – were victims of a "tragic rush to accuse." The initial [prosecutor](#), [Durham County, North Carolina District Attorney](#) Michael Nifong, labeled a "rogue prosecutor" by Cooper, withdrew from the case in January 2007 after the North Carolina State Bar filed ethics charges against him. In June 2007, Nifong was [disbarred](#) for "dishonesty, fraud, deceit and misrepresentation", making him the first prosecutor in North Carolina disbarred for trial conduct. Nifong served one day in jail for lying about sharing DNA tests ([criminal contempt](#)); the lab director said it was a misunderstanding and Nifong claimed it was due to weak memory. Mangum faced no charges for her false accusations as Cooper declined to prosecute her.

Cooper pointed to several inconsistencies in Mangum's accounts of the evening and Seligmann and Finnerty's [alibi](#) evidence, in the findings report's summary. The Durham Police Department came under fire for violating their own policies by allowing Nifong to act as the [de facto](#) head of the investigation; giving a suspect-only photo identification procedure to Mangum; pursuing the case despite vast discrepancies in notes taken by Investigator Benjamin Himan and Sgt. Mark Gottlieb; and distributing a poster presuming the guilt of the suspects shortly after the allegations. The ex-players are seeking unspecified damages and new criminal justice reform laws in a federal civil-rights lawsuit against the City of Durham. The case sparked varied responses from the media, faculty groups, students, the community, and others.

From a player's perspective (Ryan McFadyen): Excerpt taken from *The Price of Scandal: The Duke Lacrosse Scandal, The Power of the Elite, and the Corruption of our Great Universities* by William Cohan.

Then 19 years old, Ryan McFadyen, a six-foot-five defenseman on the Duke lacrosse team, remembers that March 13, 2006, was one of those gorgeous, sunny North Carolina spring days. At lacrosse practice that morning, Coach Mike Pressler had a pile of cash to hand out

to the players for “meal money”—\$30 a meal, per player for the eight days of spring break. “Coach Pressler said, ‘Yeah, here’s 500 bucks. Here’s 500 bucks. Here’s 500 bucks,’” McFadyen recalls. Afterward, McFadyen got a voicemail from David Evans, one of the team’s four co-captains, who lived off Duke’s East Campus at 610 North Buchanan Boulevard, in Durham. “I remember the message he left,” McFadyen says. “‘Hey, we’re having a barbeque over at 610. Get yourself and the sophomore guys over here. I need a six-foot-five hunk of meat in my backyard right now.’”

With cash in their pockets, the idea was just to have some fun at the house, while the rest of the Duke students were away on spring break. McFadyen got to the party at around two in the afternoon. “Guys were drinking,” he says. “We were hanging out. I don’t think I had any beers yet, because I know I went back to eat and went to the gym and worked out again.” Then he got a ride back to the party. “We were there all day, grilling, having beers, playing washers, beer pong, just having a good time, playing some music . . . Everyone was drinking and someone said, ‘Oh, let’s go to the strip club.’ Then someone’s idea was, ‘Let’s just have dancers come to the house, as opposed to risking people going out and getting in trouble. We’ll just order dancers to come here—a very common occurrence on campus.’”

After finding the phone number of the Allure Escort Services, Dan Flannery, another co-captain who shared the house with Evans, called and discussed the hourly rate for each stripper (\$400), whether they could choose the girls on the basis of traits they preferred, and if there was a maximum partier-to-stripper ratio. He gave the woman a fake name—Daniel Flanigan—but his real cell-phone number. “She called me back 20 to 25 minutes later, telling me that she had two girls,” Flannery recalled in a subsequent written statement.

When McFadyen returned to the party, “People were collecting money, like, ‘Hey, we’ve got dancers coming. Instead of going to Teasers, they’re coming here.’”

As McFadyen remembers it, when the dancers arrived, Flannery announced, “Hey, both girls are here, and they’re chocolate.” “Hell yeah, bring them in,” replied Devon Sherwood, the team’s only black player. (Sherwood says he made no such comment.)

Around midnight, McFadyen and some of his younger teammates went back to their dorm rooms at Edens, on Duke’s West Campus. “Hung out for a bit. I wrote my e-mail. I go to sleep,” McFadyen remembers. The e-mail he is referring to, he says, was a riff on the Bret Easton Ellis novel *American Psycho*, which was required reading in some Duke literature courses. The book and the 2000 movie based on it were favorites of McFadyen’s. “To whom it may concern,” his e-mail began, “tomorrow night, after tonights show, ive decided to have some strippers over to edens 2c. all are welcome.. however there will be no nudity. I plan on killing the bitches as soon as the[y] walk in and proceding to cut their skin off while cumming in my duke issue spandex . . all in besides arch and tack [two of his teammates] please respond”

Then he went to bed.

The entire Duke-lacrosse criminal case, from the night in question to the dismissal of the criminal charges against three players—Collin Finnerty, Reade Seligmann, and David Evans—took 13 months. In that time, lacrosse coach Mike Pressler was forced to resign; the remainder of the team’s promising 2006 season, for which Duke returned six All Americans, was canceled; and nearly the entire nation, including many of the players’ own professors, presumed their guilt. Pressler would eventually settle with the university for an unknown amount, and Finnerty, Seligmann, and Evans are thought to have received as much as \$20 million each in a confidential settlement with Duke. If that is correct, then between legal fees, settlements, and other public-relations fees, the party on the night of March 13, 2006 may have cost Duke \$100 million. For what was subsequently adjudged to be his many shortcomings in the handling of the Duke lacrosse case, Durham County

District Attorney Mike Nifong was fired from office, was disbarred and was sentenced to one day in jail—the only person who spent any time in jail in connection with the case. Faced with the prospect of \$180 million worth of lawsuits filed against him by the Duke players, he also filed for personal bankruptcy.

For Ryan McFadyen, however, there was no multi-million-dollar settlement and no public apology. (A lawsuit he filed, along with two of his teammates, against Duke and others is still pending.) For him what has lasted is that e-mail—sent on a whim, at two in the morning—which encouraged much of the country to believe that the narrative put forth by Crystal Mangum, the “victim/accuser,” as she became known, might actually be true. It is a cautionary tale about one of the still-evolving dangers of our new, all-encompassing digital era: how the dispatching of a single, flippant e-mail to a select group of friends after a night of partying can change your life forever.

Initially, the only reaction to the e-mail McFadyen received came from his teammate Erik Henkelman at practice the next morning. “I distinctly remember Erik Henkelman getting my joke,” McFadyen recalls. “I walked in, and he was like, ‘Dude, that e-mail was so funny.’” Afterward, “We’re walking towards East Campus, and there’s a cop car parked in front of 610,” McFadyen says, and the police were talking to some of his teammates. “Apparently, that stripper [Mangum] called the cops or something.” It would be another day or two before Coach Pressler told players that Mangum was claiming she had been raped.

At first, according to McFadyen, the players did not think it was a big deal to give DNA samples to the Durham police. “We were so convinced that nothing happened,” he recalls. “The cops were like, ‘You give it and nothing matches, it’ll be over.’ O.K., well, nothing is going to match. Take our DNA. Just take what you need.” He said the police took a mouth swab, some of his hair and fingernails. Since Mangum had told investigators that she had

viciously scratched her attacker, the police were also looking for evidence of scratches on the players' bodies. At the Durham police station, the 46 white lacrosse players on the Duke team stripped down to their boxers. "We all got basically naked and they took pictures of our bodies," McFadyen says. "I mean, we're lacrosse players. We're young, 20-year-old guys. We're covered in bruises. We're scratched up. I remember Reade [Seligmann, a sophomore midfielder] had a—because we beat the shit out of him in practice—had a bruise down his arm. 'Oh my god,' they said, 'take a picture of this,' and they're documenting his arm."

On March 27—two weeks after the party—Durham police officers Mark Gottlieb and Benjamin Himan were in a training class when Police Corporal David Addison summoned Gottlieb to step outside to see a "disturbing message": Ryan McFadyen's e-mail. The officers agreed it "was written in a manner that indicated the possibility of two or more people may have conspired to kill someone," according to Gottlieb, the lead police investigator on the lacrosse case. The e-mail—which found its way to investigators through CrimeStoppers, a community-oriented program coordinated by Addison—had been sent by one Ryan McFadyen, just before two A.M. in the early morning hours of March 14, some 90 minutes after the party at 610 North Buchanan had ended.

After the officers reviewed the e-mail, they went to see Nifong, the Durham County D.A., at the Durham courthouse. Nifong authorized Gottlieb and Himan to pursue a warrant to search McFadyen's dorm room, even though Mangum had previously ruled out McFadyen as one of her attackers.

To the original five crimes—first-degree rape, first-degree kidnapping, first-degree sexual offense, common-law robbery, and "felonious strangulation"—that the officers believed were committed in the house on the night of March 13, they now added a sixth: conspiracy to commit murder. Durham Superior Court Judge Ronald Stephens granted Nifong and

the officers the search warrant they were seeking, but he ordered it sealed indefinitely, meaning that it could not be made public until the court chose to do so.

Six police officers, accompanied by a member of the Duke University police force, began the search of McFadyen's dorm room at 6:01 P.M. Gottlieb and Himan led the team. After knocking on the door to McFadyen's room and announcing he was a police officer, Himan served the warrant on Brad Ross, a sophomore midfielder and McFadyen's roommate. While in their reports Gottlieb and Himan described a calm scene, there was at least one other perspective. According to a court document filed by Robert Ekstrand, a Durham attorney and Duke graduate who represented many of the lacrosse players in the months to follow, "Gottlieb, in particular, was in a rage. The officers destroyed furniture, and needlessly threw clothes, papers, cords, and books everywhere." Gottlieb left before the search concluded. But before he did, Gottlieb noted that "inside the room were a number of hand drawn penises on the wall with team member's nicknames, jersey numbers, and questionable racial/ethnic things written on same."

At 7:15, McFadyen returned to his room to find the search still underway.

In many ways, McFadyen was a typical Duke student-athlete: tall, strapping, handsome—an unmistakable presence when he entered a room. Bright but not bookish or intellectual, he grew up in Mendham, New Jersey, and attended the Delbarton School, a Catholic all-boys school, where he had played lacrosse. He was good but not a standout, making the second all-county team. His father was a homebuilder, and as a teenager McFadyen had worked for him during summers. "My dad is blue-collar, old school," McFadyen says. "I think he has said, 'I love you,' to me four or five time. . . . He shows his affection in other ways, and I know that."

McFadyen has three younger sisters and a very strong-willed mother. “You know: ‘No means no’ and ‘Respect women,’” he explains. “I always told my dad if I had a brother I’d probably be in the N.F.L., but I had three sisters, which has also been a good thing because I understand women and I’m in touch with my emotions more than the average guy.”

McFadyen was, indeed, emotional when he arrived back at his dorm room from the Duke library. He walked upstairs and saw four police officers in the hallway outside his room and another three in his room. “They’re just tearing through everything. Tearing it apart,” he says. “They don’t have a copy of the search warrant for me. I’m like, ‘What? Are you kidding me?’”

An officer eventually produced one. “Flipping through pages, I see my name: ‘What the fuck is this? Are you kidding me?’ Then I see the charge: conspiracy to commit murder. My fucking heart drops.”

McFadyen recalls the ensuing conversation as follows:

“‘Are you fucking kidding me? You really think—?’

‘Sir, we have to take every threat as credible. We have to take it seriously.’

‘This is a fucking joke. It’s a reference to a fucking movie.’”

It’s just my single e-mail, singled out, nothing following it, nothing preceding it, and that’s it.” Ekstrand’s paralegal Stefanie Sparks, a former lacrosse player at Duke, had arrived by this time. She advised McFadyen to cooperate.

Between his dorm and his car, officers found and confiscated: three \$20 bills, two laptops, an external hard drive, a “memory card” and two DVDs, a disposable camera, a piece of paper with “suckie, suckie \$5” written on it, some penis drawings, and a Duke backpack

with McFadyen's [jersey] number, "41," on it.

Later that night, having calmed down a bit, McFadyen called his parents. "I think it was the first time I even brought up that there was an investigation, that we'd given DNA, or anything like that," he says.

"I'm being investigated for conspiracy to commit murder," he said to them. "I remember just saying that, like, Holy shit. How do you tell your parents that?"

He told them about the e-mail. "They said, 'In hindsight, maybe you shouldn't have sent it.'"

Within weeks of the party, McFadyen was in his history-of-labor-relations class. At the start of the class, the professor and McFadyen's advisor, Reeve Huston, addressed the allegations. According to McFadyen, "He got up and said, 'I just want to take the first couple minutes of class to discuss a few items that are hot in the news. I want to talk about the alleged Duke rape case.'" In the class of about 15, eight students were on the lacrosse team. "Three things are identified to be fact," the professor continued, according to McFadyen. "One: there was definitely intercourse that night. Two: a condom was most likely used, as cited by . . ."

Casey Carroll, a junior defenseman who had not been at the party, decided he had heard enough. "I remember Casey just getting up in the middle of class and just walking out," McFadyen says. "He said, 'I'm not going to sit here and have you berate me with what you've established to be facts.'" McFadyen and the other players followed him.

On March 29, more than 500 students, faculty members, administrators, and Durham residents marched across Duke—starting at the Marketplace on East Campus and ending

more than a mile later at the Duke Chapel on West Campus—a “Take Back the Night” protest that was coincidentally part of a long-planned Sexual Assault Prevention Week on campus. The protesters distributed printed chants and the names and pictures of the lacrosse players, as well as the phone numbers for police officers to be contacted. During speeches and the reading of poetry, some people defaced the players’ photos.

In the crowd, a reporter from *The Chronicle*, the school’s daily newspaper, found McFadyen. “I completely support this event and this entire week,” McFadyen told her. “It’s just sad that the allegations we are accused of happened to fall when they did.”

McFadyen, along with teammates Collin Finnerty, a sophomore attack, Kevin Mayer, a sophomore defenseman, and a couple of others, met up at the dorm and turned on the television to watch ESPN. The media coverage of the alleged rape had exploded. “All of a sudden, I’m quoted on ESPN,” McFadyen recalls. “‘Sophomore Ryan McFadyen said it’s unfortunate these incidents occurred, while attending Take Back the Night.’ And I was like, ‘Are you kidding me?’ The kid who I casually knew from a class . . . had taken a quote that was innocent [out of context].” (The student reporter maintains that she did identify herself as a reporter, but concedes that her approach “may have caught Ryan off guard.”) He and his teammates stared at each other in disbelief. “We’re kind of looking at each other, like, ‘Holy fuck.’”

On April 5, Durham court officials unsealed the warrant that had authorized the search of McFadyen’s dorm room nine days earlier. Not only was the fact that police had searched McFadyen’s room now public but so was McFadyen’s e-mail. Why Judge Stephens chose this moment to unseal the warrant, and at whose request, is not known for certain. (The Durham *Herald-Sun* claimed credit in an article the next day; Judge Stephens, now retired, did not return a phone call seeking clarification.) In short order, all hell broke loose. Almost

immediately, John Burness, Duke's director of communications, found McFadyen's e-mail on the Web site of *The News & Observer*, the Raleigh newspaper, and took it directly to the university's president, Richard Brodhead. "That's where I first read this e-mail, and I have to say, when I read it, I was sickened," explained Brodhead. "I found it repulsive."

That morning, McFadyen went to Spanish class and then headed to the library to write a five-page history paper due later that day. By then, word was out. Ekstrand called McFadyen to tell him his e-mail had gone viral. "We need to prepare a statement," Ekstrand told him. McFadyen then went to the library and drafted a passionate defense of his actions.

At noon, standing in front of the Duke Chapel, a local television reporter read from the unsealed warrant and the e-mail, without mentioning—or likely knowing about—its reference to *American Psycho*. After watching the broadcast, Coach Pressler's first instinct was to find McFadyen. "I was worried that they had shown his picture and in the craziness that something could happen to him," he recounted in the book he later co-authored about the case. When Pressler met McFadyen at Ekstrand's office, he recalls that McFadyen was scared. "He started to explain the e-mail," Pressler said, "but I let him know that wasn't important. His well-being was the priority."

Ekstrand turned on the TV and pulled up the stories about McFadyen online. "Things have gotten real serious," Ekstrand told him. "It's probably not safe for you to go back to your dorm, so we're going to keep you at [Stefanie Sparks's] apartment for this afternoon. We'll get you some food. Just hang out there until we figure out what's going on." Ekstrand asked to hear McFadyen's statement about the e-mail. He read it aloud—it was an angry rejoinder—and Ekstrand said, "No, we're not reading that," recalls McFadyen.

McFadyen's hours at Sparks's apartment in Durham were wrenching and chaotic. He spoke with his parents again. "I'm coming down to get you," his father told him, before he flew down to Raleigh. That same day, the dean of students, Sue Wasiolek, informed McFadyen he was being put on interim suspension. "'You didn't do anything wrong,'" McFadyen says she told him. "'It's only temporary.'" At 4:30 P.M. President Brodhead held a press conference to announce the forced resignation of Coach Pressler and the end of the lacrosse season for the Duke team. He also announced McFadyen's suspension.

April 5, 2006," McFadyen says solemnly. "I wanted to get that tattooed on my body, because that moment has changed my life forever. I think about it every day. I got Coach Pressler fired. I'm responsible for my teammates having the season canceled. I take responsibility. Over a year, over two years, I've told Coach Pressler. He said, 'It's not your fault.' I still get teary thinking about it right now."

Before the day was out, McFadyen had packed up his things and left Duke. In the car, he sat silently while his father considered their options. "Let's get on the horn," John McFadyen told his son. "Let's start getting in touch with other college coaches. Obviously, you're not going to graduate from Duke." Ryan wondered if he could ever go back to Duke and, if he did, what his friends and classmates would think of him. Would he always be "the kid who wrote this completely repulsive e-mail," who "must be a sociopath" and "unstable?" But he was also frustrated. "Nobody ever gave me any opportunity to explain myself," he says. He spent the car ride back home thinking about his father's advice. "We drive through the night. We get home, like, six A.M. the next day."

By the time they arrived back in New Jersey, a horde of television trucks and newspaper photographers were lined up in front of their house. "We pull into the house, walk up, and my three sisters and my mom are all pretty teary-eyed watching the news," McFadyen

recalls. “The news anchor was just like, ‘What a sick, twisted kid. This kid’s parents must really be ashamed,’ or something like that. And I’m with my parents, and all my little sisters are there. I just remember it being, like, the heaviest moment of the whole, entire experience. . . . I remember really feeling like I let my parents down and, more importantly, like I somehow affected my sisters.”

It would take two months for Duke to sort out what McFadyen had been thinking when he wrote the e-mail and to reinstate McFadyen at the university. He graduated from Duke in 2008 and earned a master’s degree in liberal studies from the university in 2010. (His thesis was on Russia’s economic system.) But through it all, his e-mail continued to haunt him. He had a difficult time landing a job because a Google search of his name would immediately reveal it. Like many of his teammates, he had hoped to get a job on Wall Street. He got far down the road with a San Francisco-based venture-capital firm, but then his e-mail popped up and that was that. He eventually worked as a junior analyst at W. R. Huff Asset Management, in Morristown, New Jersey, and as an intern at Guerrilla Fitness CrossFit, also in Morristown. Recently, he changed his name to John, like his father’s. “I figured, if I could get in front of people—they would look at a résumé and say, ‘He’s good enough; bring him in’—I can speak to them and they’ll see that I’m not what the Internet makes me out to be,” he says. “I’m not the kind of monster that a lot of people preconceive me to be.” Since April 2012 he has been an associate at Post Road Residential, in Fairfield, Connecticut, a developer of multi-family residential homes started by the father of one of his teammates.

McFadyen explains the context of the notorious e-mail: “It was locker-room talk. It was digital locker-room talk, you know? That e-mail was just one of a lot I had sent that year. I thought of myself as a funnier kid on the team. I made a lot of jokes, and definitely I still do that with some e-mail chains. Obviously now I second-guess everything. . . . I was making a

joke, and I happened to make a dark joke referencing a movie about a serial killer who kills strippers and homeless people and prostitutes, and that tied in perfectly to the storyline of the mostly-white team raping a poor black girl from Durham.”

He continues: “I’ve been through a lot. I put most of it behind me, but I don’t think anybody can really comprehend, because to really understand what happened to me, how it affected me—I’m still not fully realizing what I’ve been through six years down the road. There’s still things that are coming out that I’m realizing, ‘Wow, this is how I live my life now because of what happened in 2006 and the two or three years after that.’ . . . I look at things a lot differently than a lot of other people and go about life in similar circumstance, whether it’s just personal relationships, professionally, the way I behave in an office, or meeting other people. It’s different.”

III. Case: UVA

A Timeline (Which reads like a Serial Podcast) from **Everything We Know About the UVA Case** By Margaret Hartmann, Jan, 2015.

Last month *Rolling Stone* published a 9,000-word article that described the horrific 2012 gang rape of a Virginia University of freshman, and how the school mishandled the incident. For a few days, it seemed to be serving its purpose: The article sparked a conversation about sexual assault on campus and how schools nationwide often respond to brutal crimes with indifference. Then, as questions were raised about why



month *Rolling Stone* published a 9,000-word article that described the horrific 2012 gang rape of a Virginia University of freshman, and how the school mishandled the incident. For a few days, it seemed to be serving its purpose: The article sparked a conversation about sexual assault on campus and how schools nationwide often respond to brutal crimes with indifference. Then, as questions were raised about why

the author, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, either failed to contact the alleged rapists or never even tried, the story morphed into a flashpoint in various other debates, from how we treat rape victims to journalism ethics to the nature of memory. With many apparent contradictions from *Rolling Stone*, Erdely, and the accuser — the latest twist involves possible catfishing — the story can be hard to follow. Here's a guide to what we know so far.

November 19, 2014: *Rolling Stone* publishes "A Rape on Campus: A Brutal Assault and Struggle for Justice at UVA"

Rolling Stone contributing editor Sabrina Rubin Erdely begins her piece on the UVA's ineffective handling of rape cases by introducing Jackie, a woman who says she was gang-raped in a UVA frat house on September 28, 2012, a few weeks after she arrived on campus.

Jackie, who was 18 at the time, says she was asked out by "Drew" (a pseudonym used in the article), an attractive junior she met while they were both working as lifeguards at the university pool. Drew invited her to dinner and a "date function" at his fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi. During the party, Drew asks Jackie if she wants to go upstairs. She follows him into a pitch-black room and screams when she suddenly realizes they're not alone:

"Shut up," [Jackie] heard a man's voice say as a body barreled into her, tripping her backward and sending them both crashing through a low glass table. There was a heavy person on top of her, spreading open her thighs, and another person kneeling on her hair, hands pinning down her arms, sharp shards digging into her back, and excited male voices rising all around her. When yet another hand clamped over her mouth, Jackie bit it, and the hand became a fist that punched her in the face. The men surrounding her began to laugh. For a hopeful moment Jackie wondered if this wasn't some collegiate prank. Perhaps at any second someone would flick on the lights and they'd return to the party.

"Grab its motherfucking leg," she heard a voice say. And that's when Jackie knew she was going to be raped.

Jackie says that for the next three hours, seven men took turns raping her as Drew and another man looked on. She says one of the men, whom she recognized from her anthropology discussion group, was encouraged by the others to penetrate her with a beer bottle. "Don't you want to be a brother?" the others tell him. "We all had to do it, so you do, too."

She comes to after 3 a.m. and runs from the house shoeless, with her "face beaten" and her dress "spattered with blood." Realizing that she's lost, she calls a friend, screaming, "Something bad happened. I need you to come and find me!" Her three friends, two boys and a girl, find her outside the Phi Kappa Psi house shaking and crying. (All of their names are changed in the article.) Randall suggests going to the hospital, but the others shoot down the idea and weigh the social implications of their next move:

"Is that such a good idea?" [Jackie] recalls Cindy asking. "Her reputation will be shot for the next four years." Andy seconded the opinion, adding that since he and Randall both planned to rush fraternities, they ought to think this through. The three friends launched into a heated discussion about the social price of reporting Jackie's rape, while Jackie stood beside them, mute in her bloody dress, wishing only to go back to her dorm room and fall into a deep, forgetful sleep. Detached, Jackie listened as Cindy prevailed over the group: "She's gonna be the girl who cried 'rape,' and we'll never be allowed into any frat party again."

Ultimately, they decide not to seek help. Two weeks later, Jackie sees Drew at the pool. "I wanted to thank you for the other night," he says. "I had a great time."

After withdrawing from her school work and social life and buying rope to hang herself, at the end of the semester Jackie calls her mother and asks to go home. She returns to school, and toward the end of her freshman year she reports the rape to Dean Nicole Eramo, head of UVA's Sexual Misconduct Board. She is given three options: file a criminal complaint with the police, file a complaint with the school, or face her attackers with Eramo present to tell them how she feels. (There's more information here about the federal investigation into UVA's handling of sexual violence, which began in June 2011.)

Jackie is now a junior, and she's become active in UVA's sexual-assault education organization. In May 2014, with Drew about to graduate, she still didn't feel ready to file a complaint, but "she badly wants to muster the courage to file criminal charges or even a civil case." The article notes that Jackie is no longer friends with Randall, who "citing his loyalty to his own frat, declined to be interviewed" by *Rolling Stone*.

November 22, 2014: The Initial Response

People were outraged by the events described in the article, particularly at UVA. Facing pressure from the campus community, UVA president Teresa Sullivan suspended all campus fraternities, sororities, and Greek organizations until January 9. She also asked the Charlottesville Police Department to investigate Jackie's rape, and urged students, faculty, and alumni to weigh in as the school reforms how it handles sexual assault.

Phi Kappa Psi suspended the activities of its UVA chapter the day after the article was published, and its national leadership said they would cooperate in the police investigation and launch their own internal investigation.

November 24, 2014: Questions Emerge

Richard Bradley, a former *George* magazine editor who was duped by Stephen Glass, writes an essay questioning the story. He says the Glass incident taught him that you should be "critical, in the best sense of that word," about stories that just confirm your own biases. He says that as a former editor, "something about this story doesn't feel right," noting that it relies entirely on one unnamed source. The friends who came to Jackie's aid weren't interviewed, and Erdely apparently made no effort to contact the alleged rapists.

Others begin to question Jackie's account and how it was reported. Reason's Robby Soave wonders if the story could be a "gigantic hoax." L.A. *Times* columnist Jonah Goldberg compares it to two notorious rape accusations that were proven false, saying "the media also uncritically reported Tawana Brawley's stories and those of the accusers of the Duke lacrosse team — until the rest of the media started doing their jobs."

November 28, 2014: Erdely Describes Her Reporting Methods

In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Erdely says that after deciding to write about sexual assault on campus, she spent six weeks talking to students across the country and eventually settled on UVA. She says she was introduced to Jackie by Emily Renda, a leader in UVA's sexual-assault group. "She was absolutely bursting to tell this story," Erdely says. "I could not believe how it poured out of her in one long narrative. She spoke so fast, I hardly had a chance to ask her a question. She was dying to share it."

Erdely says she spent weeks corroborating Jackie's account and finds her "completely credible," but the *Post* presses her on why she didn't speak to other sources:

Some elements of the story, however, are apparently too delicate for Erdely to talk about now. She won't say, for example, whether she knows the names of Jackie's alleged attackers or whether in her reporting

she approached "Drew," the alleged ringleader, for comment. She is bound to silence about those details, she said, by an agreement with Jackie, who "is very fearful of these men, in particular Drew. . . . She now considers herself an empty shell. So when it comes down to identifying them, she has a very hard time with that."

Erdely is similarly evasive when asked on Slate's Double X podcast if she knows the alleged attackers identities or tried to contact them:

I reached out to them in multiple ways. They were kind of hard to get in touch with because [the fraternity's] contact page was pretty outdated. But I wound up speaking ... I wound up getting in touch with their local president, who sent me an email, and then I talked with their sort of, their national guy, who's kind of their national crisis manager. They were both helpful in their own way, I guess.

December 1, 2014: Rolling Stone Confirms That It Did Not Speak to the Men

When asked about the alleged assailants, Sean Woods, who edited the *Rolling Stone* piece, tells the *Washington Post*, "We did not talk to them. We could not reach them." However, he says they "verified their existence" by talking to Jackie's friends. "I'm satisfied that these guys exist and are real. We knew who they were."

December 2, 2014: The Magazine Stands by Jackie, and Its Own Reporting

In a follow-up to their podcast, Slate's Allison Benedikt and Hanna Rosin explore why Erdely didn't include a response from Jackie's alleged attackers. Woods tells them he's "done talking about the story" and adds this statement from the magazine: "Through our extensive reporting and fact-checking, we found Jackie to be entirely credible and courageous and we are proud to have given her disturbing story the attention it deserves."

Benedikt and Rosin say they also reached out to Jackie's friends. They report that she got upset when Erdely wanted to know more about her attackers, and reconsidered going public.

December 5, 2014: The Story Begins to Unravel

A *Washington Post* report raises major questions about the narrative presented in *Rolling Stone*.

- Phi Kappa Psi says in a statement that it "did not have a date function or a social event during the weekend of September 28th, 2012," and none of its members worked at the pool during that time. While the article suggests the gang rape was part of an initiation ritual, the fraternity does not have pledges in the fall.
- Jackie's friends tell the *Post* that they're beginning to doubt her account. They say in the past week, she identified one of her alleged attackers for the first time. They discovered the student belongs to a different fraternity, and no one by that name was ever in Phi Kappa Psi.
- A man with that name tells the *Post* he worked at the pool and knew Jackie's name, but had never met her in person. He was never a member of Phi Kappa Psi.
- The student identified as "Andy" in the *Rolling Stone* article confirms that Jackie called and said "something bad happened" in the fall of 2012. He and two other friends ran to meet her about a mile from the fraternity houses. He says she was "really upset, really shaken up" but did not appear to be physically injured. He claims Jackie told them she had been forced to have oral sex with a group of men. He says they offered to get her help, but she said she just

wanted to go back to the dorm. She asked them to spend the night with her, and they did. Andy denies that Jackie's dress was bloody, that she named a specific frat, or that they debated the social price of her next move.

- Emily Renda says she met Jackie in fall of 2013 and they instantly bonded because they had both been raped at a fraternity party. She claims Jackie initially told her she was attacked by five men, then changed the number to seven months later.
- Rachel Soltis, Jackie's former roommate, says she noticed emotional and physical changes in her during the fall of 2012. "She was withdrawn, depressed and couldn't wake up in the mornings," says Soltis, adding that she's convinced Jackie was sexually assaulted.
- Jackie says she asked Erdely to be taken out of the article at one point, but she refused and said the article was going forward. She says she agreed to participate as long as she could fact-check her parts in the story.
- Jackie tells the *Post* she doesn't know if her attacker was a member of Phi Kappa Psi, but she knows the attack took place in that house because a year later, "my friend pointed out the building to me and said that's where it happened." "I never asked for this" attention, she adds. "What bothers me is that so many people act like it didn't happen. It's my life. I have had to live with the fact that it happened — every day for the last two years."

December 5, 2014: *Rolling Stone* Releases a Statement, Gets in Even More Trouble

Rolling Stone managing editor Will Dana releases a lengthy statement, which concludes, "In the face of new information, there now appear to be discrepancies in Jackie's account, and we have come to the conclusion that our trust in her was misplaced." Following claims that the magazine was blaming a rape victim for its own shoddy reporting, the final paragraph is revised to say:

We published the article with the firm belief that it was accurate. Given all of these reports, however, we have come to the conclusion that we were mistaken in honoring Jackie's request to not contact the alleged assaulters to get their account. In trying to be sensitive to the unfair shame and humiliation many women feel after a sexual assault, we made a judgment — the kind of judgment reporters and editors make every day. We should have not made this agreement with Jackie and we should have worked harder to convince her that the truth would have been better served by getting the other side of the story. These mistakes are on Rolling Stone, not on Jackie. We apologize to anyone who was affected by the story and we will continue to investigate the events of that evening.

December 7, 2014: Jackie's Former Suitemate Comes to Her Defense

Emily Clark, who shared a suite with Jackie during her freshman year, writes an op-ed in the UVA newspaper describing how she became increasingly depressed during fall of 2012, eventually going home right before finals. "Sometime that year I remember her letting it slip to me that she had had a terrible experience at a party," Clark writes. "I remember her telling me that multiple men had assaulted her at this party. She didn't say anything more." She continues:

However, the articles released in the past few days have been troubling to me, and the responses to

them even more so. While I cannot say what happened that night, and I cannot prove the validity of every tiny aspect of her story to you, I can tell you that this story is not a hoax, a lie or a scheme. Something terrible happened to Jackie at the hands of several men who have yet to receive any repercussions.

December 10, 2014: Jackie's Friends Suggest "Drew" Is a Fabrication

The Washington *Post* unveils another shocking twist: Randall, Andy, and Cindy, the three students who rushed to help Jackie on September 28, 2012, say details she gave them about Drew, her date that night, led them to question whether he was real.

Randall says he befriended Jackie soon after they arrived on campus. She was interested in a romantic relationship, but he said he wanted to remain friends. A short time later, Jackie began telling her three friends about Drew, a handsome junior from chemistry class who had a crush on her. They asked for the upperclassmen's number, and started exchanging text messages with him. In texts provided to the *Post*, he raves about "this super smart hot" freshman who shares his love of the band Coheed and Cambria.

Drew laments that he really likes Jackie, but she's interested in someone else. "Get this she said she likes some other 1st year guy who dosnt like her and turned her down but she wont date me cause she likes him," he writes. "She cant turn my down fro some nerd 1st yr. she said this kid is smart and funny and worth it." Randall is now convinced that he's the first year.

Jackie's friends were never able to locate Drew on social media or UVA's database. The *Post* confirmed no student by that name has ever been enrolled in the university.

The texts also included photos of Drew, which Randall provided to the paper. While his name does not match the one Jackie provided, the *Post* managed to track him down. He says he's a high-school classmate of Jackie's but he "never really spoke to her." He has not visited UVA in at least six years, he is not in a fraternity, and he was in another state at an athletic event on the night of the alleged rape.

Randall says that after the alleged gang rape, Drew wrote him an email, "passing along praise that Jackie apparently had for him."

While *Rolling Stone* says Randall declined to be interviewed "citing his loyalty to his own frat," he says he was never contacted and would have talked to the magazine.

Andy and Cindy say Erdely didn't contact them either. Last week Jackie revealed the name of her attacker to a different group of friends for the first time. Andy, Cindy, and Randall say they've never heard the name.

While the three friends are portrayed as shockingly callous in the original article, they say they did everything they could to help Jackie that night. "She had very clearly just experienced a horrific trauma," Randall said. "I had never seen anybody acting like she was on that night before, and I really hope I never have to again. ... If she was acting on the night of Sept. 28, 2012, then she deserves an Oscar."

The *Post* notes, "The article's writer, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, did not respond to requests for comment this week."

The newest revelations mean that someone is lying about Erdely's attempts to reach out to Randall. Slate's Hanna Rosin explains:

That could mean one of two things: Jackie could have given Erdely fake contact information for Randall and then posed as Randall herself, sending the reporter that email in which he supposedly declined to participate in the story. Erdely also could have lied about trying to contact Randall. Rolling Stone might

have hinted at this possibility in its "Note to Our Readers" when it referred to a "friend of Jackie's (who we were told would not speak to *Rolling Stone*)" but later spoke to the *Washington Post*. That would take Erdely a big step beyond just being gullible and failing to check her facts, moving this piece in the direction of active wrongdoing.

December 14, 2014: Jackie's Friends Dispute *Rolling Stone*'s Account, Using Their Real Names

The students identified in the *Rolling Stone* piece as "Andy," "Cindy," and "Randall" put their names to their version of events in an interview with the Associated Press. Alex Stock, 20, Kathryn Hendley, 20, and Ryan Duffin, 20, said that after getting a frantic call from Jackie on the night of the alleged rape, they rushed to meet her at a picnic table outside UVA's Fitzhugh dorm.

Kathryn Hendley disputed *Rolling Stone*'s description of her as a "self-declared hookup queen" who said Jackie shouldn't go to the police because "we'll never be allowed into any frat party again." "I'm offended that she made me out to be this really awful, self-serving person, which is really not based on any personality traits that I actually have," Hendley told the *Washington Post*. In her AP interview, Hendley says that when she arrived at the picnic table, Jackie didn't want her to be part of the conversation about what to do next, so she watched the discussion from afar.

Ryan Duffin says that when they found Jackie, "it looked like she had been crying ... Her lip was quivering, her eyes were darting around. And right then, I put two and two together. I knew she had been on this date and people don't usually look like that after a date." She told her friends that she was forced to perform oral sex on five men. "My first reaction was, 'We need to go to police,'" Duffin said. "I wanted to go to police immediately. I was really forceful on that, actually. And I almost took it to calling (the police) right there." He said he pulled out his phone and was about to call 911, "but she didn't want to and," he thought, "I can't do that if she doesn't want to do it."

Duffin says he even talked to his RA about the incident several days later, without using Jackie's name, to see if he should call the police anyway. The RA told him he could encourage her to contact the authorities, but it was her decision.

Alex Stock confirmed both friends' accounts. "Jackie's response was, 'I don't want to,'" Stock said. "I don't want to do that right now. I just want to go to bed."

Duffin says he still wants to believe Jackie is telling the truth, but he doesn't know where he stands. "The thing is, it doesn't matter," he said. "It doesn't matter if it's true or not, because whether this one incident is true, there's still a huge problem with sexual assault in the United States."

All three say *Rolling Stone* never contacted them before the article was published last month, but Erdely recently reached out to them and said she was re-reporting the story. Hendley also said Erdely apologized to her for how she was portrayed in the story.

Melissa Bruno, a spokeswoman for *Rolling Stone*, told the Huffington Post that the magazine "is conducting a thorough internal review of the reporting, editing, and fact-checking" of Erdely's story. Apparently, this effort is separate from Erdely's. Two of the friends told the *Post* that they've been contacted by a different *Rolling Stone* reporter in recent days.

December 14, 2014: Jackie's Other Friend, Alex Pinkleton, Describes Her

Conversations With Erdely

In a separate interview on Sunday, Jackie's friend Alex Pinkleton (not Alex Stock, who responded to Jackie's call for help) said she still believes Jackie was raped, but she isn't happy with how the story was reported. Pinkleton, a fellow rape survivor who was quoted in the *Rolling Stone* piece, told CNN's Reliable Sources that she thinks Erdely's "intentions were good" in writing about sexual assault on campus, but "the job was done poorly."

"I am upset with that aspect of it, but I also know that she was trying to come from a point of advocacy," Pinkleton said. "But as a reporter, you can't be, like, an advocate and support a story and listen to it and think everything is true and then report on it without trying to figure out if it's true. My job as an advocate was never to question Jackie's story or question the details, because I didn't need to. But the role that she's in as a reporter, she needed to do that."

Pinkleton said she too has been contacted by Erdely following the controversy, but she has yet to get back to her.

December 15: Phone Records Raise More Doubts About "Drew"

Jackie's friends shared more details about how they contacted "Drew," the man she claims she was on a date with the night she was raped.

According to the Daily Caller, the name she gave them for the attractive upperclassman who had a crush on her was "Haven Monahan." No one by that name was enrolled on campus, or even lived in the area.

She encouraged them to text him, and eventually they had three different phone numbers for Haven. Research by the Washington *Times* determined that all three numbers are registered to internet services that allow people to text without a phone number or redirect calls to different numbers.

Ryan Duffin said he received no response when he texted the first number Jackie gave him. Someone identifying himself as Haven contacted him from a different phone, claiming he was using a friend's phone because his wasn't working. Later Haven started texting the friends from a third number, which he said was his BlackBerry. Previously, the Washington *Post* determined that a photo sent from that number was of one of Jackie's high school classmates, who was not in contact with her at the time and is not named Haven.

December 22, 2014: *Rolling Stone* Asks the Columbia Journalism School to Conduct an Independent Review of Its Report

Following unconfirmed reports that *Rolling Stone* was re-reporting its campus rape piece, editor and publisher Jann Wenner announced that the magazine has asked the Columbia Journalism School to investigate the matter. The following editor's note will appear in the next print issue of *Rolling Stone*:

In RS 1223, Sabrina Rubin Erdely wrote about a brutal gang rape of a young woman named Jackie at a party in a University of Virginia frat house ["A Rape on Campus"]. Upon its publication, the article generated worldwide attention and praise for shining a light on the way the University of Virginia and many other colleges and universities across the nation have tried to sweep the issue of sexual assault on campus under the rug. Then, two weeks later, The Washington Post and other news outlets began to question Jackie's account of the evening and the accuracy of Erdely's reporting. Immediately, we posted a note on our website, disclosing the concerns. We have asked the Columbia Journalism School to conduct an independent review – headed by Dean Steve Coll and Dean of Academic Affairs Sheila Coronel – of the

editorial process that led to the publication of this story. As soon as they are finished, we will publish their report.

January 12, 2015: Police Say They Have No Reason to Believe That Rape Took Place at Phi Kappa Psi

As the spring semester started at UVA, the school reinstated its chapter of Phi Kappa Psi, saying police have cleared the frat, for now. Charlottesville police Captain Gary Pleasants confirmed that while they're still investigating the case, "We found no basis to believe that an incident occurred at that fraternity, so there's no reason to keep them suspended."

"We are pleased that the University and the Charlottesville Police Department have cleared our fraternity of any involvement in this case," said Phi Psi President Stephen Scipione. "In today's 24-hour news cycle, we all have a tendency to rush to judgment without having all of the facts in front of us. As a result, our fraternity was vandalized, our members ostracized based on false information."

IV. Case: OSU

She Said 'no': A first-hand account of campus rape

by Kassie McClung, *The O'Colly (Oklahoma St)* Oct, 2014

Editor's note: Ashley's, Haley's and Brian's names were changed to protect the victim's privacy.

Ashley sits at a wooden table and tucks a strand of hair behind her ear with a sweaty palm. Her eyes shift nervously from the officer to the floor. OSU Police Officer Colt Chandler places his folded hands on the table and looks at her, waiting for her to say something.

Ashley wishes she was alone.

Chandler slides a document in front of her.

"All I need from you is a signature right there," he says in a video provided by OSU Communications. "You can read through there and see what's going on."

But Ashley knows what the document says. As soon as she signs the paper her case will be closed, so she scribbles her signature on the bottom line without hesitation.

"Is there any particular reason why we chose to do this?" Chandler asks.

Ashley pauses for a moment.

"I just don't think it's a strong case," she says.

It was the alcohol, the lack of evidence and the little support she felt that shaped her decision to not press charges against her rapist.

It crushed her.

"I felt like I didn't matter, and what happened to me didn't matter," Ashley said in a recent interview with the *O'Colly*. "I felt like a statistic pushed under the rug."

1 of 9

Ashley was 18, a freshman in the beginning of her second semester at Oklahoma State University.

On a Friday night in February 2012, Ashley and her roommate returned to their dorm with two men in their early 20s after a night of heavy drinking. One was a friend of her

roommate, and the other, Brian, was a stranger.

Ashley and her roommate, Haley, went to bed and offered to let the men sleep in their living room. Haley said soon after she fell asleep, she woke to find Brian raping Ashley.

Despite their emotional positions, students facing sexual assault must make decisions quickly. Complete a rape kit? Press charges through the criminal justice system? Let their university handle it? Remain silent?

Ashley chose to complete a rape kit, and upon arrival to the hospital was told she would work with the university police department because the rape happened on campus. Brian, a non-student from Dover, Oklahoma, never confirmed nor denied raping Ashley.

In an interview with Chandler, assistant investigator of the case, and investigator Sgt. Daniel Ray, Brian said he could remember events before and immediately after, but not what occurred while he was in Ashley's bed.

Many victims say they regret reporting their rape to the police. Ashley would be no exception.

Although OSU police officers told Ashley she could file charges against Brian, she said she chose not to after being told her case wasn't strong, and that she could face a years-long court process.

Ashley signed a document at the OSU Police Department in March 2012 declining to file charges against Brian.

The only thing Ashley could do from there, she said, was begin to move on.

It's a common scenario.

The OSU Police Department reported it had investigated nine sexual assault cases in 2012, four in 2013 and seven so far this year.

Ninety-five to 98 percent of rape cases that go through the OSU Police Department are similar to Ashley's, said Michael Robinson, chief public safety officer, who has worked at the police station for more than 11 years.

Alcohol is involved, details are fuzzy and sometimes the victim wakes up after a night of drinking and doesn't understand exactly what happened, he said.

To this day, Ashley said she doesn't remember all of the details of that night, but she is certain she was raped.

'You were just raped'

It was a cold night in February, and Ashley was blasting a country song through her Bennett Hall suite, getting ready to go to an off-campus party at a nearby house.

Around midnight, she slid her feet into a pair of brown cowboy boots and went to the living room to meet Haley and their suitemate.

The girls were walking into the house as a friend of Haley's was leaving. He said he and his friend, Brian, were asked to leave because they didn't have an invitation.

It was clear the two had been drinking. When the two men admitted they couldn't drive, Haley offered to give them a ride home.

It didn't take long for the group to decide it was too early to end the night.

They went back-roading near the Cimarron River but stayed for less than half an hour before they returned to Bennett Hall to continue drinking.

Brian, who none of the girls knew, put his arm around Ashley's shoulder on the drive back. They began to kiss, but Ashley quickly turned her head away. She said she didn't think much of it because they were both drunk.

The group took a few more shots when it returned to the dorm and went to bed around 2 a.m. Haley and Ashley offered to let Brian and his friend sleep in the living room of their suite because they had been drinking.

At this point, Ashley was extremely intoxicated.

Shortly after falling asleep, Haley said she was awoken on her top bunk by what felt like a rocking movement, and Ashley saying, "no."

She looked over the edge of her bunk and said she saw Ashley looking up at her with glassy eyes, and Brian on top of Ashley, raping her.

Haley shouted at Brian to get off Ashley and jumped down from her bunk. She pulled him off the bed, hitting his head on the corner of the wall in the process. Haley said he appeared to be unconscious.

Haley allowed Ashley to put clothes on and called her to the bathroom.

"Ashley, you were just raped," she said.

Ashley wept.

Ashley, who considers herself shy and reserved, said her first reaction was to forget the incident, but Haley, worried about injuries, STDs and pregnancy, advised Ashley to go to the hospital.

Before leaving, Haley said she called a friend to get Brian and his friend out of the room. In a five-hour visit to the Stillwater Medical Center, nurses evaluated Ashley, and she gave a statement to OSU Police Officer Chet Skimbo around 4 a.m.

While there, she completed a rape kit, a forensic tool used to collect evidence of a sexual assault during a hospital examination. It includes the collection of DNA evidence like hair, semen and saliva taken from the victim's skin, nails, clothing and genitals.

Ashley said nurses gave her a morning-after pill, which prevents pregnancy, and a test for STDs. A nurse took photos of the bite marks on her neck.

Chandler searched Ashley's suite with her permission, took photos and collected Brian's clothes as evidence.

Around 8 a.m., she was allowed to return to her dorm.

She climbed into her bed nauseated and exhausted. Most people wouldn't want to revisit the scene.

But Ashley called it home — and she spent 74 more nights there.

The investigation

For the remainder of the weekend, Ashley seldom ate, slept almost constantly and was frequently woken by nightmares about her rape.

Early that week, she went to the OSU Police Department to give a more detailed account

of the night.

In a small interview room, she met with Chandler. He first asked if Ashley wanted to press charges against Brian.

After she asked him what her options were, he said the case wasn't strong because of her lack of memory.

When Ashley pointed out that her roommate was a witness to the rape, Chandler said it was only circumstantial until he had the opportunity to interview Haley.

In her victim statement, Ashley, who had been a virgin, wrote that she stimulated Brian's penis with her hand to distract him from wanting to have sex with her.

Chandler said it wouldn't look good to a jury.

It could be a difficult case for the district attorney to get a conviction on.

"The district attorney has to consider all of that before they file a charge," Robinson reiterated in a recent interview. "It doesn't mean it's not rape. It's still illegal, it's still rape, but you've got to convince a jury of 12 people that beyond reasonable doubt. No DA wants a losing record."

Out of the 20 sexual assault cases reported to the OSU Police Department since 2012, only one has resulted in charges filed. One case is under investigation, two are open and 11 victims declined to press charges. Six were referred to the district attorney's office, two of which are pending and three were declined, according to OSU police records.

Alcohol-facilitated sexual assault is a frequent problem on college campuses.

"It's very, very common," said Assistant District Attorney Lynn Hermanson. "But if I feel like I have the evidence to support it, it doesn't matter whether the victim was intoxicated or not."

Hermanson, who prosecutes sexual assault cases in Payne County, said getting a conviction on a sexual assault case involving alcohol isn't impossible, but it is more difficult.

Pushing a case forward without evidence wouldn't be ethically responsible for Hermanson or be morally right to the victim, she said.

And juries don't typically like when victims were drinking or drunk when something happened to them, she said. There's a stigma and pre-judgment about what the circumstances were or what led up to a sexual assault.

"I really don't think that's fair," Hermanson said. "I think that those types of things should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis."

Thinking back

A few mornings after her interview with Chandler, Ashley woke in her bed and let her eyes meet the bottom of her roommate's bunk.

But her roommate wouldn't be there.

After Haley's parents learned of the rape, Haley was moved back home where she commuted 45 minutes to school every day. Haley said it was frustrating.

But for Ashley, it was torture. Her support was gone.

She was too ashamed to tell her parents what happened and felt discouraged by police

officers. Ashley said because she didn't want to spend years fighting for a case she would likely lose, she closed it.

Almost three years later, Ashley sees a chaotic process in which justice didn't play a part in.

The process was so discouraging, Ashley said, she regrets reporting the incident to the police.

In Ashley's interview with Chandler, she asked him if her parents would have to find out if she pressed charges. He told her that if she did, her name and the incident would become public record.

Chandler said that her name would appear on OSCN.net, the Oklahoma State Courts Network, which is an online public database of court documents.

"You can type in my last name and see I was issued a traffic citation in 2007," Chandler said in the interview. "Everything, everybody knows about it."

However, several victims' advocates told the *O'Colly* that isn't true. Oklahoma Victims Rights' laws protect the victim's identity in sexual assault cases.

Chandler wasn't the only one confused about where victims' names appear.

In a recent interview with the *O'Colly*, Carrie Hulsey-Greene, public information officer for the OSU Police Department, Ray and Robinson also thought that victims' names were public record. However, normally only the victims' initials will appear in court records. Ashley said the fear of having people learn of the incident played a major part in why she decided to not press charges against Brian.

Universities and colleges are being called upon to do more to promote awareness of sexual assaults on campus and resources for victims. The White House issued a series of recommendations for colleges earlier this year.

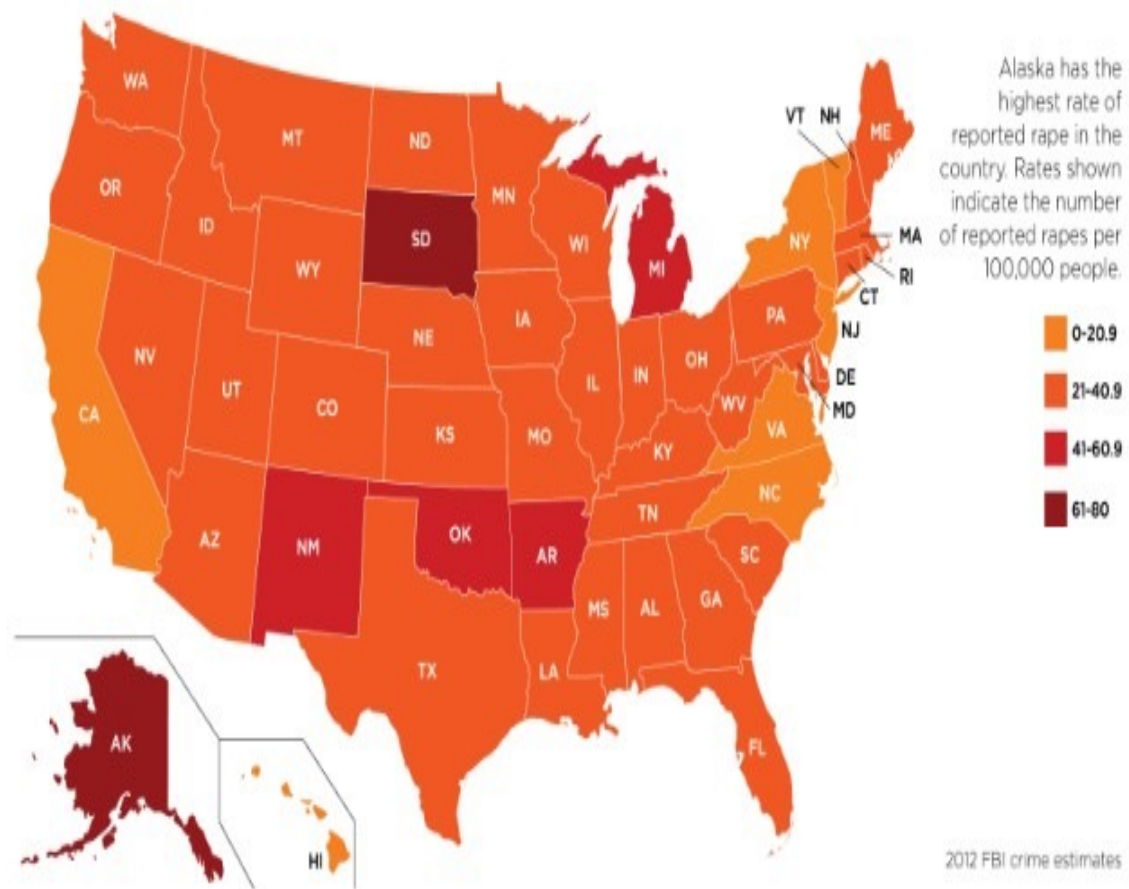
OSU, one of 79 schools the U.S. Department of Education is investigating for potential sexual assault policy violations, says it takes sexual violence seriously and already had some steps in place to curb it. But this semester, it implemented mandatory online sexual assault prevention training. However, some leaders say it's not enough.

"Having an online training program mandated for incoming students is a good start, but having it as the only required program without a mandatory in-person program that follows it is certainly not enough to create long lasting changes," said Nadir Nibras, president of OSU's men's chapter of 1 in 4, a sexual violence prevention group.

Ashley, who graduates in December, said she wants to see a change in how victims of college-setting rapes that involve alcohol are perceived in the future.

"I felt like it was never taken seriously because I had been drinking," she said. "Like maybe it didn't matter as much. But no matter what anyone says, whatever the police say, you've got to move on. You have to keep going."

HOW FREQUENT IS RAPE IN YOUR STATE?



VITA

Jorge Antonio Bermudez was born on December 2nd, 1968 in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. He graduated from William Fremd High School, Palatine, IL in June of 1987. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Performance Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1992. In 1993, he founded the Up And Coming Theatre Company and has subsequently directed over twenty productions. He received his Master of Human Resources from Loyola University, Chicago, IL in 2008. He has worked as a human resources professional in both corporate and consulting roles. He received his Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA in 2015.